Sunday, January 31, 2010 ★★ Vol. 25 / No. 34

FILIPINO OF THE YEAR 2009

ONDOY VOLUNTEERS/DONORS

Lifesaver to multitudes: 'Where I'm from, everyone's a hero'

THEY WERE LIFESAVERS TO THE multitudes who struggled to keep their heads and hopes above water, whether against the torrents of destruction or the slow currents of despair.

They were the volunteers and donors who, in countless ways, helped the battered populace—and the nation's downcast spirit—recover from the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm "Ondoy."

The Inquirer salutes them as the 2009 Filipino of the Year.

When it was time to just quit and finally catch his breath, 18-year-old constructions worker Rhodmar Magdaluyo dove back into the raging flood. In the sinking chaos, a mother with a baby was still screaming. They were the last two of about 20 lives he would save that day—before losing his own.

When there really was no shame in watching from the sidelines after one's own family had been spared from harm, tens of thousands went out of their way to help total strangers and form human chains of charity.

Barangay Captain Roger Frino of San Jose hearing rains and floods stayed on duty day and night to make sure the 93,800 families in his village in Rizal were safe, fed and sheltered.

Paddling his family's two-seater kayak through the strong current from

LIFESAVER, A2

'Boss': No kingmaker now

For first time, Danding won't back presidential bet

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

"JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS OUT ... THEY PULL ME back in."

A son of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. thinks this line from "The Godfather" trilogy aptly describes what his father, acknowledged political kingmaker and business magnate who seems to have pulled back from both activities, has to contend with.

For the first time since making a comeback nearly two decades ago, Cojuangco is not placing any bets in the 2010 presidential election, notwithstanding that two of his nephews—Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and former defense secretary Gilberto Teodoro—are running for the top post.

This is according to his son, former Negros Occidental Rep. Charlie Cojuangco during a freewheeling interview on Wednesday in the keynote office, which he visited not to talk about his father but about the nuclear power advocacy of his brother, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco.

BOSS, A13

Awesome 5 days of 'fine tuning,' renewal for RP priests

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"I SHED TEARS OF JOY. IT WAS A time of renewal," said Fr. Rooco Buriagoda of Roxas San, a priest for 28 years.

Salesian Fr. Francis Gustilo of the National Congress of the Clergy II (NCC II) program committee said the experience "felt like cure of our priesthood."

"It was a happy surprise, a common learning experience. We relearned and renewed. It will have a great impact," he said.

For Fr. Jon Rabogon, 36, of Negros Occidental, the encounter with so many priests was unforgettable.

It was an event that was unprecedented for its sheer magnitude and spirit. "Na-celebrate na Aqui! (We have been fine-tuned)," participating priests shouted with glee when it was all over.

Uniformly clad in white chasubles and cream-colored stoles, 5,542 priests and bishops were an awesome sight as they ended their five-day NCC II with a huge concelebrated Mass, which many of them had never experienced.

For the final day, all the participating priests and bishops, in their white robes, walked the 1.2-kilometer stretch of Roxas Boulevard from the World Trade Center, the congress venue, to the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City for the concelebrated Mass led by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales and Archbishop Nereo Odchimar, the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

The 5,542 participating priests

AWESOME, A13

Few steps of kindness save her from crashing plane

By Nash B. Maalam
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—IT WAS LIKE THE biblical David telling his best friend Jonathan: "Only a step separates me from life to death."

Best friends Arlis Gumiran and Angelina Mondrado, a laundrywoman, were separated by a few steps of kindness.

Gumiran said she had just gone into her bedroom to get money to lend to Mondrado, 51, who lives in nearby Zenaida Subdivision, when a Philippine Air Force Nomad roundfired into her house before noon Thursday.

The plane plowed into the living room where Mondrado was seated, killing her instantly. Gumiran suffered burns and was recovering in a hospital.

All eight passengers and crew of the plane died. (See related story on Page A2.)

Her having gone into her room just seconds before the plane came crashing into her house apparently saved

FEW STEPS, A2

PARALLEL LIVES Ex-President Joseph Estrada and Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim watch up on each other during brunch at the Manila Polo Club.

Erap, Anwar: Old pals compare jailhouse notes

By Norman Bordadora

THEIR FRIENDSHIP HAS grown and survived despite the distance between Manila and Kuala Lumpur and the prison cells that kept them from each other and the rest of the world.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada and Malaysian legislator Anwar Ibrahim, who are both again leading opposition movements in their countries after serving jail time for what they claim to be politically motivated charges, recently met for brunch where they laughingly compared the length of their prison terms.

"How long did you stay in jail?" Estrada is supposed to have asked Anwar, as quoted by Estrada's spokesperson Margaux Salcedo.

"Six years," replied Anwar. (See related story in The World, Page A17.)

"I was in jail for six and half years," claimed Estrada, adding that one other political leader had beaten them both by another six months.

"Hence Aquino was detained for seven years," Salcedo quoted Estrada as saying.

Estrada and Anwar had a late breakfast of fried milkfish, fried eggs and fried rice at the Manila Polo Club yesterday.

The banter continued between the two friends when they met the media after the meeting.

"He knows more about Ritzl than [I do]," Estrada said, explaining his admiration for the visiting Malaysian and why their friendship has lasted.

"I admire him because he's so learned," Anwar said with a laugh.

ERAP, A2

Pinoys brush teeth less or use less toothpaste

By Paolo G. Montecillo

"BRUSH YOUR TEETH EVERY DAY. Preferably, after every meal."

This was the message of Cecilia Pedro, founder of the proudly Filipino-brand Aquee Toothpaste, made popular by its pearwood endorser, Lea Salonga.

For the first time in a long while, Pedro said toothpaste consumption in the Philippines declined, despite the continued growth of the population and the economy.

In his over two decades in the business, 2009 was the first time he'd seen

PINOYS, A13

• **'Terminator'** not coming NEWS • **Haitians tire** of waiting, start rebuilding • Defiant Blair says no regrets over Iraq war WORLD • **Freddie Garcia** set to do a Simon Cowell • GMA 7 CEO on serial dinners for his stars and staff in his Forbes Park home: Just a social gathering, not loyalty check' • Who's afraid of Krista? • Listing of Valentine shows ENTERTAINMENT • **What stirs** up the usually unflappable Manny Villar • Purita Kalaw-Ledesma: The woman behind RP's awakening to its visual arts • Thumbs up, thumbs down SUNDAY LIFESTYLE • **Workout wonders** never cease SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE

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WEATHER FORECAST

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6/49 LOTTO: 18 46 10 8 32 + 9 — P93,847,096.00

'Plane crash could've been prevented'

By Christine Cabuso
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—DEFENSE Secretary Norberto Gonzales said the Jan. 28 plane crash that killed eight Philippine Air Force personnel and a civilian in Cotabato City could have been prevented had the military's modernization program received enough funds.

"The modernization should have been done yesterday. We need modernization, old planes should be replaced with new ones," Gonzales told reporters after his student visit of the Philippine Military Academy here on Thursday.

The Philippine Air Force Nomad that crashed into several houses in Barangay Rosary Heights, Cotabato City was a 23-year-old plane. The plane's pilot, Capt. Orestes Gerlord Ortenzia, had radioed the control tower, reporting a "power loss" seconds before the aircraft went down and burst into flames.

Gonzales said the seven others on board the plane died in the crash: Maj. Gen. Mario Lacson, head of the 3rd Air Division based in Zamboanga City; 1Lt. Angelica Mirlet, Maj. Peter Tandoy, 2Lt. Alexander Lijauco and Staff Sergeants Reynaldo Mejia, Jason Chiong Marone Llamera and Jeffrey Grimm. At least one civilian, Angelina Mendrado, also died when the plane slammed into the house of a friend she was visiting.

Modernization Act balance

Since the enactment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Act (Republic Act No. 7898) in 1995, the military has received up to P98.67 billion to reform systems and improve hardware, according to the annual AFP modernization accomplishment report posted on the website www.afpmodernization.mil.ph.

The amount is the balance of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund, which is made up of allocations from the national budget, as well as proceeds from the Base Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the state-owned Philippines National Gas Project, the report said.

Gonzales said the P98 billion that had been released was only a small part of the P331 billion that the government had earmarked for the modernization program.

Add the budget allowance the Department of National Defense gets from the government and there is little left to upgrade the military's equipment as required by law, Gonzales said.

The modernization plan followed a strict schedule for upgrades in order "to modernize the AFP to a level where it can effectively and fully perform its constitutional mandates to defend the sovereignty and protect and preserve the patrimony of the republic," the report said.

According to the report, "The lack of consistent funding allocation has resulted in stalled projects, price escalation, and disbursement in...jeopardy."

However, Gonzales said that before the DND reviews its lobby to augment the modernization program, it needs to make sure the procedure for government purchasing and other potential avenues for corruption are plugged.

1M-strong disaster force

He also said the DND is organizing its reservist force from 250,000 to one million to augment military personnel tapped to respond to disasters.

In his speech, Gonzales said his decision to reconcile the reenlistment of military reservists was due to the growing number of calamities hitting the country.

"Whenever there is a crisis, [the government] resorts to the AFP. There are during times of typhoons, floods, insurgency and fire-fighting of ships. For every crisis, more people ask for help from the AFP, that is why our mission is to expand," Gonzales said.

"This is an era of change and a little bit of instability," he added.

He said it was important for people to feel the presence of the military during calamities because it helps lift their spirits when they know someone is there to help them.

NBI on alert vs free-Andal threat

By Joaquin J. Andrade

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) has gone into "extraordinary alert" following an alleged brash threat reportedly aimed at freeing Maguindanao massacre primary suspect Andal Ampatuan Jr. from the NBI jail.

NBI Counterintelligence and Security Group (CISG) chief Ric Dino told the Inquirer that an improvised explosive device (IED) was discovered early last week in a carpark at the Greenhills Shopping Center along with a coded message and a map with the NBI and Department of Justice (DOJ) buildings marked with an X.

The map, he said, had "1-31-2010" written on it, apparently the date when a bomb attack would be carried out. "It is simply a threat. The IED was composed of a rifle grenade as its main charge but it had no blasting cap. But we are not taking chances," Dino stressed.

Scare tactics

"It is maybe intended to scare the NBI into extending the transfer of Ampatuan to his sympathizers could easily halt him and," Dino said, citing the fact that the NBI has been an heightened alert since it took the mayor of Datu Unsay town in Maguindanao into custody.

Asked why the NBI thought the threat was linked to Ampatuan, Dino explained that neither the NBI nor the DOJ had "requestioned" such a threat before amid the main Maguindanao massacre suspect was taken to the NBI jail.

He said that Ampatuan might possibly have sympathizers from Maguindanao in the Greenhills area.

In justifying the extraordinary alert, Dino said, "We should not take anything for granted."

As part of the extraordinary security measures, bomb squads have been conducting regular inspections at the DOJ, NBI and Supreme Court compounds.

NBI personnel have been placed on standby, aside from the regular personnel on detail, to double security at the agency and the other government agencies.

'Comelec has work cut out for it'

WITH 39 DAYS TO GO BEFORE THE country's first-ever automated elections, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is facing an uphill battle trying to convince voters and other stakeholders the automated polls would push through despite test delays and glitches.

In reforum at the Pamantasang Lungsod ng Maynila sponsored by ANIM radio yesterday, Comelec officials assured the public that the automated national and presidential elections on May 10 would take place.

Bayan party-list secretary-general Renato Reyes had expressed concern over the conduct of the elections in May after field tests last week showed some weaknesses of the machines and its transmission system.

In the field test at Agoncillo Elementary School in Batangas, it took Comelec officials three hours to transmit the results to the municipal hall because there was no cell phone signal in the area. To finally submit the results, the Comelec used satellite transmission, which was successful.

Reyes said the Comelec needed to address those problems with only three months remaining before the landmark polls.

Machines all ready

Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento said Smartmatic TIM Corp. had finished manufacturing the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines in Cebu.

According to Sarmiento, 46,000 machines were already here while 8,000 were on the way.

The rest of the 82,000 machines on order, or 36,000 sets, have been completed and are awaiting shipment to the Philippines.

"I was assured that everything will be here by Feb. 23. As a matter of fact, the machines are already finished," Sarmiento said.

Comelec officials said the software that would be used in the automated election system is ready and has been tested by an independent reviewers.

No anomalous software

They also stressed that there would be no anomalous software embedded in the code that will allow the machines to read, count and transmit the ballot results.

This fear was evoked by poll watchdogs, who voiced apprehension that some sort of bug would be placed inside the program to manipulate results and to favor one candidate.

Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal said the software that would be verified by a third party would be shown to political parties, representatives of presidential candidates, election watchdogs, and other stakeholders on Monday.

"We'll set the parameters of source code review, the guidelines, protocol and others that will be observed by those who will witness it," Larrazabal said.

Larrazabal said the Comelec was addressing these problems with Smartmatic TIM. He said that the field tests were conducted precisely to check on the voting, counting and transmission systems. The Comelec, he said, has scheduled another comprehensive test on Feb. 6.

Kristine L. Alave

Arnold won't be coming after all

By Percival Dela
Correspondent

SACRAMENTO—CALIFORNIA GOV. Arnold Schwarzenegger is not scheduled to travel to the Philippines anytime soon, his press office clarified yesterday.

"I don't know where all this came from but the governor is not scheduled to go to the Philippines," said Rachel Acevedo, the governor's spokesperson, after she was shown news clippings from leading Manila newspapers about Schwarzenegger's purported visit starting Feb. 7.

The governor's February calendar was wide open as of Friday and did not show a visit to Manila or any world capital anytime soon.

On Wednesday, news media outlets in Manila reported that the governor was to arrive in the Philippines with a group of Filipino-American economic technocrats who wanted to share strategies in "addressing the challenges brought by globalization."

Schwarzenegger's supposed trip was announced at a press briefing by a private foundation helping the Philippine government solicit international humanitarian funds to help the country recover from the ravages of a series of devastating typhoons last year.

Press Undersecretary spokesperson Gary Olivar said that the governor, a former world-class bodybuilder before turning Hollywood action hero and politician, would assist in the "heavy lifting" of the government body seeking overseas money from world sources.

The governor who has led his state in dealing with floods, fires, earthquakes and droughts was to lend his celebrity status to the effort.

As California governor, Schwarzenegger has traveled to the Pacific Rim but not to the Philippines.

He has made trips to Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong usually in his self-appointed role as the state's salesman-in-chief. His foreign travels have been mostly to increase California's international trade—a $200-billion activity in the Golden State each year.

Erap, Anwar: Old ...

From page A1

Anwar was the deputy prime minister when he had a falling out with the then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. He was jailed on corruption and sodomy charges in April 1999.

In 2001, Estrada was ousted in a popular uprising that followed an aborted impeachment trial.

Estrada was arrested in 2001 on plunder charges and was briefly detained in a police camp in Laguna before being granted "not house arrest" in his lavish vacation estate in Tanay. He was convicted of plunder in 2007 but was pardoned almost immediately by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

A federal court overturned Anwar's conviction in 2004 but when against a return to politics was upheld. After the probation lapsed, Anwar won a landslide victory and reclaimed a seat in the Malaysian parliament in 2008.

Estrada recently was given the go-ahead by the Commission on Elections to run for President in May.

Estrada expressed concern that Anwar could again be facing "politically motivated cases" because of his popularity among the masses—something that he said he could easily identify with.

The former movie star has repeatedly blamed the country's ills for his ouster in 2001. He has styled himself as the champion of the masses and was elected in 1998 on a pro-poor platform.

No hair trial

"[Maybe] this is my final revenge trip to show my brothers," said Anwar who still has another sodomy charge to resist this week.

"I have not had a fair trial," he said, adding that a judge who acted with fairness in his case was promptly replaced.

According to Anwar, Liberal Party presidential candidate Benigno Aquino III went to see him on Friday night at the New World Hotel where he is staying.

He said both Aquino and Estrada were "family friends."

"They treat me as a family member," he said.

Anwar said his last visit to the Philippines in 2008 was quite memorable as Estrada hosted a dinner that Aquino's mother, former President Corazon Aquino, attended even though she was already suffering from cancer.

Memorable dinner

"Number forty was then very ill but she was there. It was very memorable for me, [my wife] Azizah and the family," Ibrahim said.

Anwar would not comment on who the likely winner of the 2010 election would be, He said Estrada and Aquino were both his friends.

Estrada drew reminded reporters: "He's a friend of the Aquinos. He's a friend of Erap. Let's not put politics in it."

Estrada said he and Anwar talked about the prospect of the Philippines' first non-member-action-oriented elections.

"We're worried that there might be a failure of election," he said of the Comelec scandal—two to encounter problems with the machines.

According to a press statement from Estrada's office, Anwar conveyed that "automation can lead to a lot of mistakes. It's is less than 100 percent automatic, it can be very dangerous."

Invite Asean observers

Anwar suggested that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations be invited to observe the conduct of the elections, the statement said. He said the automated election would be a first in Southeast Asia.

In his meeting with reporters, Anwar said he also wants to learn from the Philippine election experiences.

"We have relatively free elections, a free media. We don't have that in Malaysia," he said.

"No opposition leader would be given five minutes on television in our country," he said.

Lifesaver to multitudes: 'Where I'm from, everyone's a hero'

From page A1

during Typhoon Ondoy in Pasig-Marikina River basin.

While the economic slump was tightening many belts, and still easier in massive waves. Senators poured in from the famous and the luminous, the rich and the not-so-rich, as well as from companies and the mga government units.

Without being asked, they rescued trapped souls, were coming back for abandoned pets. Some wrote generous checks, many lugged cheerful boxes packing relief goods, others personally comforted the sick and the sad.

5M lives

Going by official figures, their acts of compassion rippled across the lives of five million Filipinos affected by Ondoy in Metro Manila and 26 provinces.

According to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), Ondoy (International name: Ketsana) killed 464 people, injured 529, and left 37 missing. The 39th storm to enter the country last year also left 78,000 people homeless and destroyed P11 billion worth of crops and infrastructure.

However, the storm from that dark, Saturday afternoon of Sept. 26 can never be reduced to numbers.

In just six hours, Ondoy dumped what was normally a month's worth of rain, starting over the southern and northeastern mountain communities, including those that had never before gone underwater, into murky lakes.

Magnificent, massive response

Some of the most harrowing stories came in President Villages, a middle-class subdivision in Marikina City, where residents climbed trees or escaped to rooftops as the deluge engulfed their two-story homes.

From there, a shocked nation learned of the first sightings of corpses adrift with cars and floating debris.

The biggest, frightful picture didn't take long to emerge. TV news and websites would have ran eyewitness videos: Floodwaters inundating army vehicles, cattle with people atop its them, swimming one into another, a cluster of men clinging for their lives atop a floating carousel of debris, hurtling down a swollen river, passing beneath a nearly submerged bridge and disappearing from sight; a refrigerator sailing down a flooded street; till it got caught in a web of power cables, where the unwitting water fell it hanging precariously—some 20 feet off the ground.

When the skies finally cleared, Ondoy's unparalleled fury drew a humanitarian response of a scale and level unseen in recent memory. As reports of killer waves jolted up in the days that followed, so did the tales of heroism, and then inspiration.

Jet ski, free laundry

Costumes big and small were all deemed noble in their own right, mirroring the lack of government aid and response to calamities.

On the day the storm hit, from 4 p.m. to midnight, Quezon City Judge Ralph Lee personally landed trapped residents in one ground—two or three at a time—using his jet ski. The Novaliches neighborhood, where his extensive raised about a hundred people, later hailed him as "superman."

The Baltimore Beach Laundry Inc. offered its services for free. It also turned its warehouse into an evacuation center for about a hundred families.

Parishes, schools, companies, and civic groups set up networks of relief-processing centers, where thousands of volunteers worked in shifts for weeks.

At the Ateneo de Manila's covered courts, for example, groups of 600 people at a time took turns preparing relief packages. ABS-CBN's Bagyo Bagumbayan lined up in 16,000 dozens in operations that kicked off within hours after the storm and lasted up until November. GMA 7's Kapuso Foundation also held fund-raisers and relief operations months to be affected areas. In about the same period, the lobby of the Inquirer office in Makati City doubled as a warehouse and repackaging area.

The Catholic Church through Caritas Manila raised millions of pesos, even as someone writing on a website for "Filipino artistes" enhanced pesos to do their share, saying: "We may have different beliefs, but we are one with the rest of the Philippines in light of this tragedy. Two hands helping trumps a thousand clasped in prayer."

Pouring Ondoy videos

Writing later on Facebook, a diligent volunteer recounted how the trade rate there was powdered milk in every bag of goo cause this packed. But she also unpacked at how many people mindlessly dumped in ruin, lacy dresses, floral gowns. Give the rescuers some "dignity," she pleaded.

A top honcho of Ion Miguel Corp. offered to buy up to 50 motorized boats just to speed up rescue and relief efforts, while the Philippine Inter-Island Shipping Association offered to ferry relief goods for free.

A cyber junkie identified only as Ramin Ising ("Inferno fan") created an interactive Google map alerting active teams to various emergency situations, including areas hit by looters, rats or traffic gridlocks.

More initiatives helped keep the world abreast by posting Ondoy videos, blogs and murals-boosting shootouts. "Where I'm from, everyone's a hero," read one proud slogan that spread across social networking sites.

Albay, itself a storm-weary province, sent volunteers in Marikina within hours after floods were hogging close search on Mayon Volcano. In Laguna, public school teachers agreed to hold classes in their own homes while their campuses sheltered the homeless.

The NDCC said the country's intervention of appeal for funds raised a total of $26 million or P1.2 billion (as of November 2009). The Department of Foreign Affairs, meanwhile, reported a flurry of cancellations from overseas Filipinos.

Even dogs were rescued

Television farms set up "Ondoy Away" (love calls) centers, hospitals were out medical teams, and a popular bookstore and school supply chain made sure the relief centers never ran out of adhesive tape.

"Pacquiao," "Bible," "Manny" and "Lyndon" were the names given to some of the stranded dogs found alive in the muddy villages days after the storm, thanks to a mission led by the Animal Rescue Philippines coalition.

Rescuers perished

Marilyne Magallanes nearly and grabbed a mother and her 4-month-old daughter just when the baby, kept afloat in a Styrofoam box, was about to be swept away by the flood in Sagang Gilangan, Quezon City. While trying to rescue more neighbors in an a wall collapsed on the otherwise strong swimmer and a TV set fell on his head, killing him instantly, witnesses said.

Several more rescuers perished during their relation. Among them were from a team that limited out in Laguna composed of members of the Philippine Army and the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (Cafgu), namely: Pfc. Vivencio Ambeta, Cpl. Adriano Bagza, Joel Hatmilit, Ernesto Glagpet, Pedro Hinandilyan and Artemio Oscocilo.

The Senate passed resolutions hailing Magallanes, Ambeta and Bagza. Two resolutions applauded Magallanes as one of its Top 10 Heroes of 2009.

Instant noodles

Ondoy was immediately followed by a four more typhoons in more than year.

Typhoon "Pepeng" blew in a week later, as did typhoon "Santi" after two weeks, wreaking fresh havoc on a land where September wounds had barely healed.

Still, it was Ondoy's sheer violence—and victimless of the people's sense of normality—that would leave the deepest scar on the collective psyche.

Within days, the pain became bearable. The bleak stares and anguished faces gradually lightened up. Relief goods continued to arrive in, as much as, instant noodles were coming out of the evacuees' ears... Suddenly there was reason to laugh again.

'I will not forget'

Thanks to the volunteers and donors for whom selflessness is either a divine spark or a patriotic duty, a "feel good" adventure, an instinctive response to any crisis, an investment in good karma or an end to ennui.

We honor the Ondoy heroes in the best way we know how together with a project of thanksgiving.

Blanche Peñaloza, the grateful mother of the baby girl saved by Magallanes said it best for all of us: "I will never forget."

"PUSHCART" salvager and CNN hero of the Year Efren Peñaflorida placed second with 2010 vote.

How Inquirer editors voted

THE FILIPINO OF THE YEAR IS THE ELEGANT'S way of applauding a living Filipino individual or group who made the biggest positive impact on the life of the nation in the year just past.

Established in 1991, the honor first went to Rajah-mahi Philippines, then passed on, for his heroic and single handed efforts to save lives and educate Filipinos during the Mt. Pinatubo eruptions.

An exception was made in 2004 when the Inquirer editors voted almost unanimously for presidential candidate and movie king Fernando Poe Jr., a few days after he died.

For 2009, the "Ondoy" volunteers and donors emerged as the predominant choice, earning 20 of the 36 votes cast by editors and assistant editors, from among six nominees.

"Pushcart" educator and CNN Hero of the Year Efren Peñaflorida placed second with six votes.

Leila de Lima, chair of the Commission on Human Rights, received four.

Tess Bacon, supervisor in their own fields, also made it to the runoff. International singing sensation Charice Pempengco earned three votes while three grandmaster Rhodey Ile got two.

A vote went to a group (which, technically, may be considered) to Ondoy relief rescue team since it sprung two serious during the calamity. But the Bukkel Tau Wanjiky Organization earned its own special place in the list of nominees for its community-based disaster preparedness program, an example of which resulted to zero casualty in Barangay Sumbo, a riverside community in San Mateo, Rizal.

Other Filipino of the Year honorees were Haydee Yorac (1992), Juan Flavier (1993), Corazon Filipino Wavelers (1994), The Filipino Everyman Jose and Juanita dela Cruz (1995), Fidel V. Ramos (1996), Corazon Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin (1997), Joseph Estrada (1998), Gregorio Aquino (1999), Chief Justice Hilario Davide (2000), Supreme Court Justices (2001), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2002), Manny Pacquiao (2003), Fernando Poe, Jr. (2004), ESA Gamers Filipino Soldiers (2005), Antonio Meloto (2006), Gov. Ed Panlilio (2007) and Manny Pacquiao (2008).

Aquino and Pacquiao, hosting from several major, are in the Inquirer's Filipinos of the Year hall of fame.

COTABATO crash site

Few steps of kindness ...

From page A1

her life, neighbors said.

Family all accounted for

Jayson, one of Dionisio's three children, was also in the house but escaped with only minor burns. Her youngest daughter Analyn wasn't far away either. She was walking home from school.

Dionisio's eldest child was in Manila, while her husband Eric was away at work.

Antonio Anito, a brother of Montilado's, said his sister had gone to Gerona to harvest money for her daughter's schooling.

Montilado's death orphaned her six children. Months ago, her husband Tony, a furniture maker, died of stroke.

Next door up in flames

Nobody knew why the Catubao family's house which was set ablaze by the explosion. Statistically, no one was in the house at the time.

Capper Catubao, who works for the Commission on Audit in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) had gone to Cagayan de Oro where he and other regional auditors were to meet COA Chair Reynaldo Villar, according to his wife, Emelita.

Emelita said she and two children were in Davao City to attend to school matters. Their eldest daughter had reported for work at the ARMM Department of Public Works and Highways in Cotabato City.

The family except for Jupot, arrived yesterday morning and found their home charred and in ruins.

Palace softens up on seniors bill

By Michael Lim Ubac

INTO THE ELLIPSE up at arms against a possible veto of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, Malacañang yesterday appeared to have softened its opposition to having the act signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

About four million senior citizens will benefit from value-added tax (VAT) exemption on certain goods and services, guaranteed in the act once this would enable them to fully enjoy the 20 percent senior citizen discounts.

After the Department of Finance (DOF) expressed reservations about the act because it involves P16.4 million in foregone revenues yearly, deputy presidential spokesperson Rene de Sahdo said yesterday the proposal is to be studied thoroughly by the President and the officials concerned.

Speedy action

"We don't have an advice from the Palace on this issue. But I'm sure that once submitted to the President, it will be quickly studied by Malacañang so that there will be a speedy action on this," Sahdo said. government ma Kailyo ng Bayan in Filipino.

Sahdo was responding to a question raised by program host Rocky Ignacio about the loss of the expanded Senior Citizens Act and Ease Your Legal Assistance bills, which have both ratified the legislative process.

Increase benefits

On Jan. 27, the House and Senate bicameral conference committee recommended for approval by Congress of the act increasing the benefits and privileges of senior citizens.

The bicam decided to recommend approval of Senate Bill No. 3581, in consolidation with House Bill No. 6990.

This was quickly ratified by both chambers this week.

SB 3581 was principally authored by Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on health and demography.

Sen. Pia Cayetano, chair of the Senate committee on social justice, welfare and rural development, sponsored the bill on the floor.

Other co-authors of the bill included Senators Manuel Roxas II, Manuel Lapid, Minister Defensor-Santiago, Edgardo Angara, Manuel Villar Jr., Antonio Trillanes IV, Ramon Revilla Jr. Gen Flor Nicanor Bermudez, Commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the military would defend Ampatuan, Jr. on the other hand, we have to worry about defeat issues," Oliver told a news briefing.

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Price controls boon to kids with cancer

By Dona Z. Pazolagan

PRICE CONTROLS IMPOSED ON CERTAIN medicines in August last year have benefited children cancer patients, according to an advocacy group.

Of the 21 medicines subjected to a maximum drug retail price (MDRP), 10 were medicines for the treatment of childhood cancer, said Junice Melgar, executive director of the Cancer Warriors Foundation.

The MDRP effectively cut the prices of the medicines by 30 percent.

Melgar said the prices of the generic counterparts of these cancer medicines were also lowered.

"This enabled kids with cancer and their parents to avail themselves of the medicines on their own and it showed foundations like us and charity agencies like the PCSO (Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office) to stretch our funds and help with the [treatment] cost," Melgar said in a recent survey conducted by the multisectoral Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA) Philippines.

Brain cancer survivor

A survivor of a rare brain cancer himself, Melgar reminded health authorities of their promise to expand the MDRP coverage after three months.

Executive Order No. 821 placed five countries, but expensive medicines under price regulation effective Aug. 15.

These drugs include the antidepressant drug amitriptyline, the anticholesterol drug atorvastatin, the antibiotic medicines tobramycin and the anti-neoplastics anti-cancer drugs cytarabine and doxorubicin.

Under pressure from Malacañang, drug companies mainly belonging to the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) voluntarily cut the prices of 10 other medicines by at least 30 percent.

These include stimulants and laxatives which are antihypertensive drugs; the anti-thrombotic drug clopidogrel; the antidiabetic drug glimepiride; the antibiotic drugs piperacillin + tazobactam, ciprofloxacin, metronidazole and co-amoxiclav; the laxatives, carbocisteine, cephalexin, cephalosporin, etoposide, meropenem, ranitidine, terbinafine sodium and steroid which are anti-cancer drugs.

Drug companies however claimed they would lose about P10 billion in annual sales because of the mandatory and voluntary price reductions.

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RP to host 2-day meet on nuclear disarmament

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By Cynthia D. Balana

MORE THAN 50 EXPERTS FROM ALL over the world will converge on Manila on Monday for a two-day workshop on nuclear disarmament.

The workshop is preparatory to the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York in May, which will be chaired by the Philippines.

In cooperation with Norway and Austria, the Manila workshop will be attended by representatives of 57 NPT state parties, including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Egypt, India and Iran, as international organizations, and six global non-governmental organizations.

Among the participants expected are Ambassador Sergio Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; United States Ambassador James Starbe, special representative of US President Barack Obama to the NPT; and Israeli Ambassador Aviv Dascasi, arms control and disarmament envoy of the UN.

Issues on the agenda include: The implementation of the follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between Washington and Moscow; an action plan on nuclear disarmament; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; strengthening of safeguards; and the nuclear program of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and other areas.

But the experts are also expected to push for the declaration of a nuclear-free zone in the troubled Middle East.

The NPT, which came into force in 1970, was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology; to advance nuclear disarmament; and to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The NPT stipulates that a conference be held every five years to review its implementation.

New formula

Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, president-elect of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, said he hoped the workshop would come up with a new formula/approach for nuclear disarmament.

Although not itself a nuclear power, the Philippines has a big stake in this issue, Cabactulan said, pointing out there are about eight million Filipino workers scattered all over the world.

"The Philippines has huge stake in the Middle East: 2.4 million Filipinos. We run the day when any of those nuclear weapons, in the hands of either states or private individuals, whose number and location we know nothing about, is detonated," he said in an interview with the Inquirer.

Not a remote possibility

Cabactulan said that in the US alone, the prospect of a terrorist crashing an airplane into a nuclear facility or detonating a powerful dirty bomb—without a nuclear plant is not a remote possibility.

"There are 2.7 million Filipinos in the US. The same scenario could happen anywhere in the world—where there are Filipinos," Cabactulan said, adding that the list of terrorist groups that have explored nuclear options includes Al-Qaida and Jemaah Islamiyah, now grouping known to have links to Philippine rebel groups.

"With well-knit linkages of terrorist groups, dirty bombs could be in our country," Cabactulan said.

"We will not wait for the day when the Jemaah Islamiyah has transferred nuclear know-how to local subgroups," Cabactulan said, referring to the Abu Sayyaf terror group in Mindanao.

Cabactulan said the number of countries that had acquired nuclear weapons could soon increase.

Philippine Ambassador to Japan Bonifacio Salonga, who is in Manila to attend the workshop, said nuclear weapons proliferation posed a more immediate threat to humankind than climate change.

"Nothing can happen today or tomorrow," he said, citing heightened tensions in the Korean Peninsula which could affect the Philippines.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, January 31, 2010
4th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading

1 Cor 13:4-13, 13:13 (or 1 Cor 13:4-13)

Be that as it may, set your hearts on the more precious gifts, and I will show you a much better way. If I could speak all the human and angelic languages, but had no love, I would only be sounding brass or a clashing cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, knowing secret things with all kinds of knowledge, and had faith great enough to remove mountains, but had no love, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I had to the poor, and even gave up my body to be burned, if I am without love, it would do me no good whatever.

Love is patient, love is kind, without envy it is not boastful or arrogant. It is not ill-mannered nor does it seek its own interest, love never counts injury and forgets offenses. It does not take delight in wrong, but rejoices in truth. Love accepts everything, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love will never end. Prophecies may cease, tongues be silent and knowledge die, appear. For knowledge grasps something of the truth and prophecy as well, but when what is perfect comes, everything imperfect will pass away. When I was a child I thought and reasoned like a child, but when I grew up, I put away childish ways. Likewise, at present we see dimly as in a mirror, but then it shall be face to face. Now we know in part, but then I will know as I am known. Now we have faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Gospel Lk 4:21-30

Jesus said to the people of Nazareth, "Today these prophetic words you have just heard are fulfilled."

All agreed with him and were lost in wonder at the gracious words that came from his mouth. "Is he not Joseph's son?" they asked. "Will he not quote to me the saying: Doctor, heal yourself! Do here in your town what they say you did in Capernaum."

Jesus added, "No prophet is honored in his own country. Truly, I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens withheld rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land, yet Elijah was sent to any of them, but to a widow of Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and no one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian."

On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. They rose up and brought him out of the town, to the edge of the hill on which their town is built, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he passed through their midst and went his way.

Communion

"While Jesus was praying, the heaven opened."

Whoever finds his life will lose it;
and whoever
loses his life
for my sake will find it.
Then Jesus spoke to us, too:
"Here, see how I have set no bridge above
and no by-ways.
I AM THE WAY.

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Cops violating gun ban to be shipped South

STUBBORN POLICE OFFICERS BETTER read this.

Erring policemen caught violating the nationwide gun ban would be shipped off to Mindanao after undergoing a 30-day refresher course, Philippine National Police Director Jesus Glenn Gerard Andres said yesterday.

In a statement, Verzosa said he had directed all regional police directors to promptly issue relief orders for any of their men caught illegally carrying guns in preparation of their deployment to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on Jan. 31.

"In law enforcement, police personnel are expected to be the first to uphold respect for the law and not to violate it," Verzosa stressed, adding: "It is therefore unacceptable for law enforcers to become law breakers."

Since the gun ban started on Jan. 10, 91 policemen have been relieved from duty with 498 civilians for defying the Commission on Elections (Comelec) resolution prohibiting the unauthorized carrying of firearms.

The PNP chief said the erring police personnel would be initially assigned to the Regional Special Training Unit while taking the necessary Character and Spiritual Development Training program.

Verzosa previously ordered the relief of 1,092 policemen from Maguindanao, one of the seven ARMM provinces, after several of them were implicated in the massacre of 57 people in the province on Nov. 23 last year.

He gave the PNP Internal Affairs Service 30 days to resolve the administrative cases filed against the policemen who were also charged with criminal cases.

"Similar sanctions will be meted out on police unit commanders who shall be found remiss in their duty to conduct operations against gun ban violators and partisan armed groups," Verzosa warned.

The PNP has repeatedly reminded its personnel that only on-duty policemen in proper uniform are allowed to carry firearms in public, per the Comelec order.

Marlon Ramos

Urban planner gives 60 tips on mitigating disaster

By Alcuin Papa

THE GOVERNMENT should convert open spaces like parks in Ulaanbaatar into emergency shelters, relocation centers could be evacuated, an urban planner has proposed.

This was one of 60 measures he discussed in a report submitted to Prime Minister Sanj Bayar, a copy of which was forwarded to The Standard.

Pelaburo proposed, a copy of which was forwarded to The Standard, would also include the immediate distribution of government maps to communities, the opening of a culture of disaster preparedness classes in the basic education level, and the institution of close coordination between the private and public sectors in preparing for disasters.

"I don't want to talk about preparation for disasters after they've happened. I'm used good urban planning, architecture and engineering, funding and, most of all, political will to mitigate the effects of disasters," Pelaburo said.

10-year plan

In his proposal, Pelaburo said government should carry out a 10-year plan of programs and projects to mitigate disasters.

First on the list are efforts to fight fires. He proposed the designation and identification on the barangay level of escape routes and evacuation sites which can be schools, parks and other open spaces. This is particularly important in urban poor communities where wooden structures are built close together.

Ideally, he said, such barangay should have an open space that is at least 10 hectares in size or one square meter per evacuee. There, the injured could be given unconfined attention.

He could bring issues should be restricted to the size of a school district. These zones, Pelaburo said, should have "fire breaks" like roads, rivers, creeks and canals to serve as boundaries and prevent the spread of fire. Roads should also be improved to allow fire trucks access to the living zones.

Improve spaces

Barangay and homeowners associations should be used to improve living spaces against disasters, implement a disaster plan, coordinate disaster fights, organize fire-fighting squads, and conduct information drives to inform residents of what to do in case disaster strikes.

Steps should also be taken to conduct a structural audit of all buildings. Force should be on government built structures like schools, hospitals and bridges. Building regulations and standards should be implemented.

To mitigate flooding, waterways should be cleared and sewerage systems should be unclogged and improved.

Priority should be given to ensuring safe drinking water, that water supply systems should not be more than 1,500 kilolitres every household in a community, and should be sidewalks, static three feet of drinking water per person per day.

The government must learn from the lessons of events like the recent Ishinomaki-quake and adopt best practices in disaster mitigation and response from developed countries like Japan, Taiwan and the United States.

Presidential bets asked: How green are you?

WITH THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD about to start, environmentalists have called on the presidential candidates to come out with their agenda for the environment.

EcoWaste Coalition said the candidates should disclose their positions and solutions for dealing with climate change.

"It's high time we into the hot of disclosure and debate about the candidates' green agenda that can guide the electorate in choosing new leaders who will chart the way towards a clean and sustainable future," said Monsy Cabanos, EcoWaste Coalition president.

The group made the call as it held its 14th general assembly at the University of the Philippines in Diliman which drew more than 300 civil society leaders.

"It is not enough for the candidates to profess their concern for the environment. Voters need to know where the candidates stand on key environmental issues as well as their plans and respective track records in the environmental field," Cabanos said.

"It is imperative for the public to ask these questions and for the candidates to respond truthfully," he said.

Ecowaste said it sent Gaston Ilagan Ziesmilla-ford Initiative (GZI) to help out and analyze the green agenda of the 10 presidential candidates.

It will conduct a survey on the candidates' stand on the environment, similar to the one it did during the 2004 and 2007 elections, to coincide with Earthquake and other allied green groups.

The questions in the survey will deal with various environmental issues, including toxic waste, water protection, climate change mitigation, chemical safety, ecological agriculture and renewable energy.

The answers of the candidates will be analyzed and graded from "green to grey" by a panel of evaluators composed of non-partisan environmentalists.

"We hope that the candidates will cooperate fully, respond to the survey promptly, and take this opportunity to communicate to the electorate their environmental vision and platform of action," Alcuin Papa said.

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World Leprosy Day 2010

DEKLARASYON NG PILIPINAS BILANG SUPORTA SA 2007 PANDAIGDIGANG APELA UPANG MATIGIL ANG ESTIGMA AT DISKRIMINASYON LABAN SA MGA TAONG APEKTADO NG KETONG

Ang **ketong** ay isang sakit na kadalasang *hindi nauunawaan* ng mga tao at *nagdudulot* ng *diskriminasyon* at *estigma* sa mga taong *inaapektuhan* nito. Ang ketong ay *nagagamot* na ang sakit na ito, ngunit kung pabalabasan, maaaring maging sanhi ito ng kapansanan na nagpapalala sa panget na paghirap at pakikirungot sa mga taong inaysakit na eto o tinatawag na estigma. Ang "Multi Drug Therapy" o MDT sa libre sa mga health centers at pampublikong ospital, ay napatunayang nagpagaling ng milyon-milyong tao sa buong mundo. Ang inalawakang gamutan gamit ang MDT ng mga bansang laganap ang ketong ay nagpababa ng bilang ng mga kaso. Gansumpaman patuloy pa rin ang dinaranas na diskriminasyon at estigma ng mga taong may ketong. Ayon sa Artikulo Bilang Isa ng Pangdaigdigang Deklarasyon ng Karapatang Pantao, ***"Ang lahat ng tao ay isinilang na malaya at pantay-pantay sa dignidad, at sa lahat ng kanyang karapatan."*** Bilang suporta sa deklarasyong ito, hinihimok namin ang lahat ng mga Pilipino at mga mamamayan sa buong mundo na isakatuparan ang nilalaman ng Pangdaigdigang Deklarasyon ng Karapatang Pantao, sa bawa't salita, kilos at gawa at sa lahat ng pagkakataon.

Bilang karagdagan sa mga nabanggit: Hinahangad namin na kami ay tpalang at magkaroon ng pantay-pantay na *oportunidad* at *proteksyon* sa batas. Hinahangad namin ituring at kilalanin kami bilang mga normal na tao. Nanniniwala kami sa antng kakayahan para sa aming kaunlaran tungo sa kapaki-pakinabang at normal na pamumuhay nang may pantay-pantay na oportunidad sa hanap-buhay, panjakinyap ng tpunan at tiwala sa aming kakayahan. Isinusulong namin ang maagap na pagkilala sa mga palatandaan at simtomas ng ketong at kusang-loob na pagpapakonsulta sa mga health centers sa buong bansa upang matiggan ng libreng MDT at mamasan ang mga kapamsanan na sanhi ng ketong. Hinahangad namin makamit ang maayos at pantay-pantay na pagtanggap ng mga pangunahing serbisyo sa lahat ng mga pampublikong lugar at pasilidad.

Nanaiwagan kami sa lahat ng Pilipino at mamamayan ng buong mundo na gumawa ng kapalgtgnang maaaring mamuhay ng normal ang lahat ng taong apektado ng ketong. Hinihimok namin ang mga mamamahayag, namumuno ng bansa at mga lokal na pamunuan na magwagawa ng batas tinggil sa pagtanggap sa mga taong may ketong, upang magkaroon ng pantay-pantay na oportunidad sa edukasyon, pagsasanay, hanapbuhay, pakikisalamuha sa tpunan, paghubog ng espiritwal at pag-angat, at pag-untad ng kabuhayan.

Kaming mga kalahok sa Pambansang Pag-usap sa Pandaigdigang Apela 2010 Upang Ilgil ang Estigma at Diskriminasyon Laban sa mga Taong May Ketong, ay nangangakong susuportta at kikilos ayon sa mga prinsipyo na itinalaguyod ngDeklarasyon ng Pilipinas tungo sa ilang mundong walang ketong.

Bilang tanda ng pag suporta sa Deklarasyong ito, buong puso kaming lumalagda, ngayong ika-28 ng Enero, taong 2007 dito sa Heritage Hotel, Lungsod ng Pasay, Republika ng Pilipinas.

Tulungan nawa tayo ng Diyos.

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18 private army members nabbed in Laguna, Masbate

By Marlon Ramos

EIGHTEEN ALLEGED MEMbers of two private armies were arrested in separate police operations in Laguna and Masbate on Sunday as state forces stepped up security measures amid threat of the May elections, police said yesterday.

"The arrests were part of sustained opposition police operations to neutralize private armed groups," said Philippine National Police Director General Jesus Verzosa.

Verzosa said that in Masbate, residents sought the help of the police at around 4 p.m. Friday after an armed group led by one Benjy Antonio allegedly set up an illegal checkpoint in Barangay Mabuhay, Pio Duran town.

He said local policemen and Special Action Force (SAF) commandos rushed to the area but were mauled by the armed men triggering a brief gunfight.

"Seeing the fire fight, the suspects scampered in different directions among civilians as cover," Verzosa said in a statement.

Chief Supt. Pedrito Bitad, chief of the Directorate for Integrated Police Operations in Southern Luzon, said Soliven was the leader of a private army believed to be behind the killing of Barangay chief Bb Armando of Esperanza town on Jan. 20.

Bitad said seven suspected members of the group were arrested during clearing operations.

Verzosa placed Masbate under "special police watch" and deployed 100 SAF commandos to the island province due to the presence of at least four private armies.

In another operation, Bitad said police arrested a suspected drug den in Biñan, Laguna, and arrested 13 persons who supposedly belonged to a private army.

The raid, he said, was covered by two search warrants issued by Judge Leoncio Manzabing of Biñan, Cavite.

Warrant out for 'running priest'

By John Paul Aunkio

A WARRANT OF ARREST is out for "running priest" Fr. Robert Reyes in connection with a libel case filed against him by the son of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile.

The Quezon City Regional Trial Court issued the warrant late last year in connection with a libel case filed nine years ago by Juan Ponce Enrile Jr. against the activist priest. Lawyers for erring priests were the last resort on appeal.

The allegedly libelous statement made by Reyes in an interview with broadcaster Pinky Bacbacan in November 2000 was: "Kaya nahihirapan si Juan Ponce Enrile at [Solicitor Enrile,] nay 'yon napahiwalay sa asawa and his pedicure was served. It's good to remind the public."

Reyes said he was attending to the death of Edgar Robert Lozon, the son of a first cousin of his, in a party in Makati in 1979.

The young Enrile, the supposed heir of Cagayan in 2013, said the statements was libelous. No date had been fixed against the Enrile-Jet Li's death at the height of the martial law years.

Reyes was first arrested in connection with the libel case in May 2002. He was released after two days of stay he posted P 10,000 bail. Reyes's arraignment was scheduled for December last year but was reset to this year due to his failure to attend.

The new arrest warrant was issued after QC Judge Marie Christine Azcuna declared the earth bond posted by Reyes forfeited "for his failure to redeem the court of his surrounding address in violation of the terms and conditions of his bond."

Court records showed that motions were sent to Reyes's lawyer, Rolando Cruz filed, but the motions were returned to the court after the lawyer moved his office to another place.

Enrile's counsel then filed a motion to issue an arrest warrant, which was granted by the court.

Sought for comment, Reyes said he was not afraid of being arrested, adding that he was not informed the proceedings against him were ongoing.

"The last time I attended a hearing was six years ago. I was not informed of any other hearing after that. I am willing to be arrested and if I can make voluntarily, I will stay longer in jail this time," he said in a phone interview.

SMART

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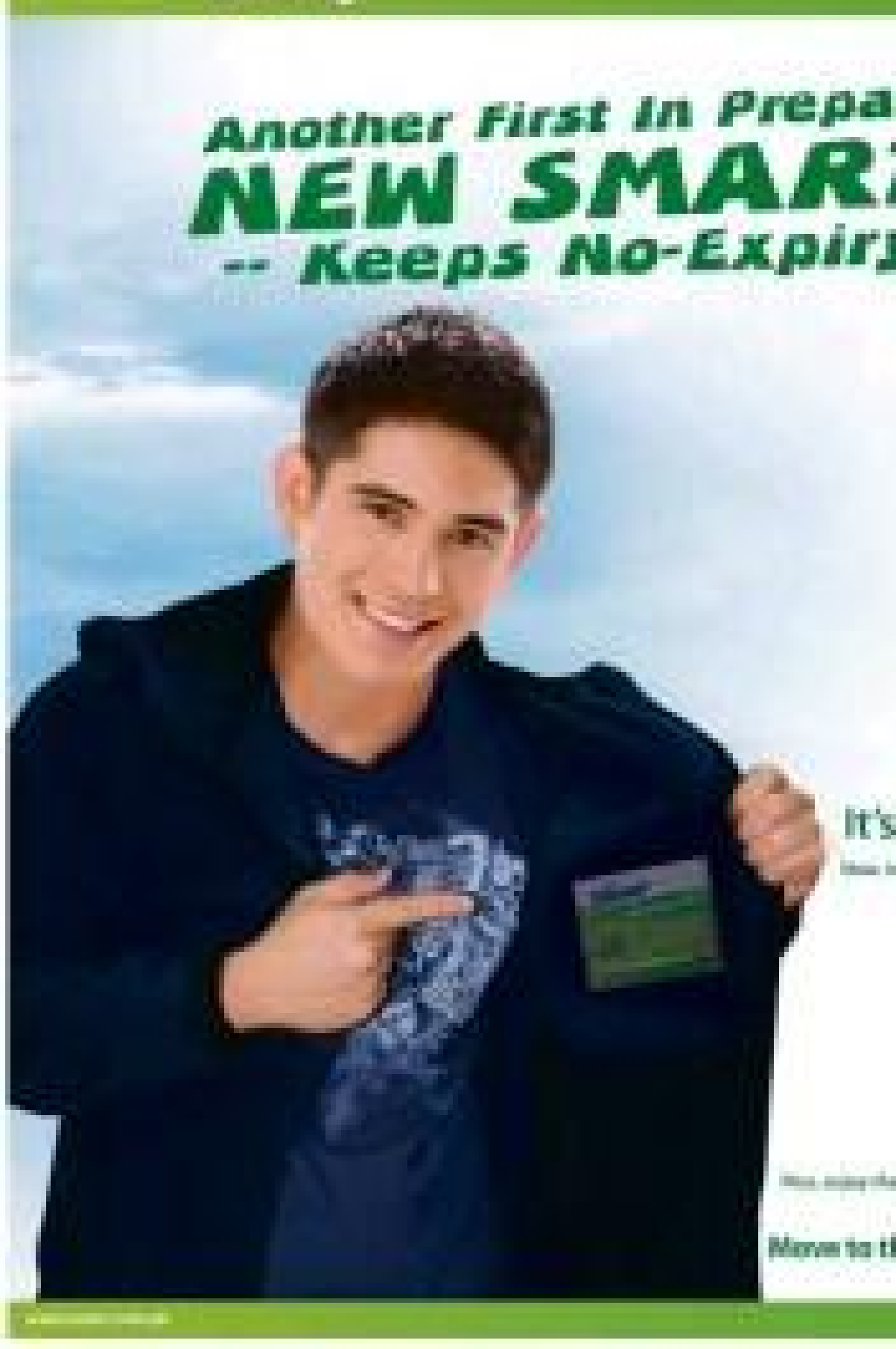

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OPINION

Time bomb

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS GONE ON a self-proclaimed "charm offensive," engaging several that she's been generally hostile to if not patently dismissive of. Last week she had an impromptu dinner with members of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap). More recently, she embarked on a campus tour to tout her "legacy." There is something ironic about this campus tour when her legacy in education has been to try to divert our tickling time bomb by trumpeting propaganda.

Peter Wallace, a business observer, recently released a report titled "Universities Times," summarizing damning findings. Quoting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, he points out that the Philippines is a "striking example of under performance."

"Today," Wallace reports, "out of 100 Filipino kids who enter school, only 65 get to finish primary. Back in 1998, 70 got to finish; while only 42 finish high school compared to 54 who did in 1980. Add to that the fact that public expenditure per high school student (as a percentage of GDP per capita) fell from 10.7 percent in 1999 to 8.2 percent in 2004. While the education department has been getting a bigger allocation from the government (from P80 billion in 1999 to P140 billion in 2008), there's been no significant increase in real terms—P80 billion vs P92.5 billion, for example. The total education budget's share to National Government budget has been declining (19 percent in 1998 to a little over 11 percent in 2008)."

He also puts forward four damning sets of data:

Our country's "Education budget is only between 2 percent and 2.5 percent of the country's GDP, lower than the 4 percent to 5 percent recommended by Unesco. Major East Asian economies allot 5 percent to 6 percent. The country spends the least on educating its kids ($110 per child vs. Thailand's $1,048)."

The Philippines "has the largest student-teacher ratio at elementary level in Southeast Asia, next to Cambodia."

Enrollment peg losses due to overprinted materials in F22 billion: "The amount could have been used to build 4,500 classrooms or procure 11 million desks or 440,000 computers. Or pay teachers a decent wage."

And an "IMD report noted that, together with Indonesia, the Philippines has the worst secondary school enrollment rate among the Asian countries."

These disheartening statistics point to a government treading water instead of actively navigating the challenges of an increasingly complex world. Mr. Arroyo herself famously solved the shortage of classrooms by decreeing double, even triple shifts, and after so doing, claimed there was no longer a classroom shortage.

As it is, even as public debates focus on the costs of education, policymakers' warnings about taking a more strategic approach—and convincing parents and students of the required, tough reforms if Filipinos are to remain competitive domestically and internationally—are being ignored. The President herself seems to be blind and deaf to the findings of the Presidential Task Force for Education, which pointed out that a span of 15 to 16 years must cover education from Grade 1 to the undergraduate level. But the Philippines stands out as having the shortest education cycle in the world: only 14 (10 for basic and four for undergraduate).

We have to keep our kids in school longer just to meet minimum equivalencies around the world.

Take the Bologna Accord. According to educator Ignatz Cruz, it comes into effect this year in the European Union. It would essentially not recognize Philippine diplomas because our graduates would have gone through an insufficient number of years in school. The effect of the Bologna Accord will be to close off many job opportunities to Filipinos. Once adopted by the European Union, we can foresee the United States taking a similar, critical (actually, dismissive) attitude toward Philippine education credentials. We cannot emphasize enough the devastating effect this would have on the employment prospects of Filipinos abroad.

But the President has been silent on this score, and her charm offensive in the campuses seems focused on her political objectives for 2010 rather than on improving the quality of Philippine education.

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The position next in line

SEPARATE OPINION

Ignatz A. Cruz

May the presidential appointment of the next chief justice without the JBC recommendation be excused?

SO, WOULD HE BE INTERESTED TO KNOW that, as President Macapagal-Arroyo's first appointee to the Supreme Court, her former lawyer, Antonio T. Carpio, was hailed as a top-billed counsel of the administration. Now, however, because of his many datazens against his decision, least of all as logical successor to Reynato S. Puno as the outgoing chief justice, all previous talk about the beneficial justice has stopped among her loyal subjects.

This must be because of the plan of Mr. Arroyo to choose the next chief justice before her term ends as noon of June 30, 2010. She claims that as President she can do anything legal and permitted by the Constitution except the powers vested solely in the opposite person. What she is doing is simply welcoming as President of the Philippines the official who will replace the outgoing chief justice. This will happen when Chief Justice Puno will read his swan on May 17, 2010; and this will happen before the end of her term term at noon on the 30th day of June of the same year.

Until that last date happens, she is entitled to all the respect the Constitution accords her. And let us not forget the likelihood of her becoming the prime minister of the new government if the current Constitution is revised.

Under the Administrative Code, vacancies in certain cases are filled by the person called by the law or next in line, subject to specified cases. In the judiciary, the rule on succession by seniority is observed, as where a presiding justice of the Court of Appeals immediately resigned where a junior member of the court was preferred by the appointing power.

There are at least three cases in the Supreme Court where the senior associate justice was defeated, to wit: (1) when Senior Associate Justice Florentino Feliciano resigned but not being called to replace Chief Justice Cayetano Arellano in 1920; (2) when Justice Felix Makalintal and later Justice Ramon Aquino were named chief justice over senior Justice Claudio Teehankee in 1986; and (3) when Justice Artemio Panganiban was appointed chief justice instead of Senior Associate Justice Reynato S. Puno in 2005.

Right now, there is no likelihood that the senior associate justice, who is Justice Carpio, is going to be the next chief justice if the appointing power is still lodged in President Arroyo. She has much of her remaining power to appoint the next chief justice. But people are praying she will not do so and leave the power to the incoming president.

There are two steps involved in the appointment of judges and justices by the president of the Philippines. The first is the nomination of the Judicial and Bar Council and the second is the appointment made by the president. One can exist without the second?

There is no doubt there are two separate acts from two different constitutional bodies that are supposed to complement each other; and the second body is supposed as well to check the first. The JBC was created in addition to the Commission on Appointments. Its function was to remove from the latter office its special functions of checking the aptitudes and responsibilities of men and women whose life, liberty and property would be the special subject of their task.

There is talk against Malacañang that the Judicial and Bar Council may refuse to submit to the President its recommendations for the next chief justice on the ground that the appointment at this time is not necessary. The presidential appointment based on the JBC recommendations is necessary. May a petition to compel them submission be filed? May the presidential appointment of the next chief justice without the JBC recommendation be excused?

To remove its seeming over the merits of judges and justices would loosen our vigilance over the judicial department. The overall effect would be the complete control of the president of Philippines over the members of the judiciary.

Let us maintain the present power of the Judicial and Bar Council to limit all presidential appointments to the judiciary. All judges and justices must bear the special recommendation of the president of the Philippines and the Judicial and Bar Council of their honesty and competence.

Without such consensus of responsibility, there would be such a concentration of power in the president of the Philippines over the judiciary that will destroy the wisdom of separation of powers among the three branches of our republican government. Would you prefer that alternative?

Opposition

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

SOMEONE ONCE SAID THAT IF YOU ARE planning to buy a second-hand car, the best thing to do is to take the car to iron out doubts, and tell them you want to sell it to them, and they will tell you everything that is wrong with it.

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk. 4, 21-30), we are told that Jesus encountered opposition from his own townsmen in spite of his greeting. Some all-over the region, and in spite of His gracious words, His fellow Nazarenes, especially the chief priests and elders, insisted on what was what right but on what was wrong with Him. Indeed, no prophet is acceptable, especially in his own native place.

* * *

We cannot please everyone. In fact, we should not. Otherwise, we will end up pleasing no one. At root as we take a position, right away there is opposition. As the first thing to do is to take a stand and face the consequences of our decision. In the end, may we not have regrets that in our efforts to please man and ourselves, we did not do what is pleasing to God.

* * *

Whatever position or opposition we take is for a mission. A mission always points to something or someone greater than ourselves. Prophets are those who point to something or someone beyond themselves. Are you doing your role as a prophet, or are you one who owns only profits?

* * *

Congratulations in the organization of the second National Congress for the Clergy held at the World Trade Convention Center last week. It was indeed an "amazing grace"! That some 3,500 priests (out of about 8,000 in the Philippines) could come together for six days of prayer, reflection, camaraderie and renewal was itself an achievement. At no, it was an awesome experience just to be there and be with fellow priests of different ages, shapes, colors and even smell, and to feel the ties that bind us, and the common mission that unites us.

* * *

There is nothing hysterical, dramatic or euphoric when priests meet. Blame it perhaps on our formation and training which put emphasis on asceticism and discipline at the expense of emotions and expressions thereof. But a handshake, a smile, a warm, a and were empathy in being across the years, sign of respect, oneness and solidarity with each other's pains and gains, joys and struggles, hopes and dreams. Even without words we knew, and we were reminding each other, "Hindi ka nag-iisa (You are not alone)!

* * *

A many thought crossed my mind: What if a bomb exploded and wiped out all the priests and bishops in attendance? That would have been tragic. Would that have made a difference in our country and in our people's lives? My answer is a humble but clear yes. We can never underestimate the value, the reach, the effect of one priest to people's lives, down to the last barrio, to the remotest, nite or barangay, to the last and the least person in our midst. Well, a bomb did not explode, thanks to God. Real Presidents of the Philippine National Police and the other security agencies involved. What exploded in our midst was the synodical communion of the holy spirit that brought renewal in our priesthood and commitment to our mission.

* * *

To be ordained a priest is a gift from God. To be still in the priestly ministry is a humbling gift from God. By the grace of God, we are still around, and still making rounds. Please pray for us, your priests. On behalf of my brother priests, thank you for your prayers, understanding and support. On behalf of my brother priests, sorry for whatever hurt, scandal, disappointment we have caused. And on behalf of Jesus the Eternal Priest, I and my brother priests invoke God's blessings upon you, and pray for you. Amen.

* * *

My ordination prayer: You have called me, Lord, not as much because of me, but in spite of me; not as much to become a somebody but to be a someone in you and in your people. Keep me, Lord, ever in your love. Amen.

* * *

Here are five unanswerable but necessary questions (and disquieting questions) we all, especially we priests, should ask ourselves again and again: (1) How much do I care? How much am I sharing? (2) What am I really doing? Why am I doing what I am doing? (3) How is my love life? Is there enough love in my life? (4) Am I happy or gay? Is there joy in my life and ministry? (5) Whom am I hoping? Why do I get so anxious?

* * *

An 1903 Mission Awards on our Centennial Year's 98-year-old Fr. Wilhelm Van Rijk, SVD, the oldest living member of our Society. He arrived in the Philippines from the Netherlands in 1938, and has been here ever since. He served in Pangasinan, Bohol, Abra, Vigan, Tagaytay and Metro Manila, doing all sorts of work in joyful and humble obedience. Now hard of hearing and speech, his whole life is one loud, clear message that, by the grace of God, it is possible to be faithful to one's priestly and missionary calling.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, remind me that whatever position or opposition I take is for a mission. Amen.

How GMA can prolong her stay

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

IN A PASTORAL STATEMENT ISSUED LAST weekend, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)—through its new president, Bishop Nereo Odchimar—urged the Commission on Elections to "make sure that there are prepared fallback positions that can be quickly adopted when there are glitches in the [automated election] system and in the logistics." I take this as a reverberation of my opinion that Comelec should "prepare for manual poll now."

PCOS owes inadequate. Comelec Chairman Jose A. R. Melo promptly replied that the commission "is confident in the operability of its technology in manual polls," a far cry from his earlier boast of "agnostopic proficiency."

Like most people, I too want liberation from the fraud, power and major shortcomings of the manual system. However, the many unnerving delays, unsolved logistical problems, and unanswered technical questions have convinced me that Comelec can no longer perfect its automation system in time for the May 10 polls. The solution? To transmit all the way "Helsinki" at this juncture would be risky because, like the Election Center (Special Task Force) system, it does not have enough time to be properly prepared.

In a media briefing on Jan. 27, Comelec Commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal declared that the PCOS machines have successfully passed their laboratory and field tests. Granted arguendo. But I just cannot believe that the machines have been tested only once (the PCOS machines).

More important, passing those generic hurdles is not to assume ease of success in the actual use of the machines. Properly, the tests should be made after the machines have been calibrated to count the ballots specifically printed for each of the 1,630 towns in the country. Foolhardy tests can be made only when the PCOS are already to see Comelec's own lingo, "process operable."

Second deficiency, a dry run should be conducted to each of those 1,630 towns, using the real ballots with the final candidates' names (mayors, councilors, etc.) penned on them. This means that the ballots should first be printed correctly, delivered correctly to each of those towns and to each precinct therein, then voted upon, and then counted correctly. Otherwise, the machines will not be properly calibrated and not correctly calibrated. Unfortunately, Comelec has no more time for these crucial tests.

Hunt "on prior" can happen. Let me grant, for the sake of argument, Comelec's forecasts that no "automation" errors and/or failures would happen. Nonetheless, Comelec admitted during the congressional hearing last Jan. 27 that there may be automation problems in almost 30 percent of the country. This is what worries me: problems and mishaps—whether intended or not—in several towns and cities will cause delays that can legally trigger a failure of proclamation (no prez) by presidents, vice presidents and senators.

Consider this: The latest poll surveys indicate that the presidential race is getting tighter. Manny Villar appears to be winning the wide gap lamented by Noynoy Aquino. Perhaps people, like who will win, let us assume that the margin of the winning candidate would not exceed 1.0 percent of the votes cast. Since Comelec estimates that 40 million [out of the 47 million registered voters] would actually cast their ballots, the winning margin would not exceed four million (1.0 percent of 40 million), still a veritable "landslide."

Glitches in 15 percent (not in say 30 percent) of the country would result in no proclamation of presidential race since 15 percent of the total votes cast [six million] would not be counted. Legally, when the unaccounted votes are determinative of victory, no one would be proclaimed winner, because those unaccounted votes could overhaul the lead of the lone winner. So, there would be no prez for national officials, especially for the presidency.

Here GMA can step. On the other hand, there being no similar problems in 85 percent of the country, the local winners in those areas (governors, mayors, congressmen, including partylist Rep. Gloria M. Arroyo) would be proclaimed. Hence, the House of Representatives could then elect one or more of them as speaker.

Without a duly proclaimed president constituted on June 30, 2010, with only the country considering that President Macapagal-Arroyo, Vice President Noli de Castro, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Speaker Prospero Nograles would all end their terms of office on that date? Answer: GMA can claim to be "holdover" president. Once elected speaker, she could then continue her reign as "acting" president, per the succession prescribed by the Constitution.

Can the holdover as a new president after Juan Ponce Enrile's term ends on June 30, 2010? No, for it is tantamount to an abuse of power, and in 2010 will not constitute a question to do four term. On the other hand, the new replacements would also suffer the "no-prez" syndrome.

In sum, a tabled election in 15 percent of the country would give GMA the opportunity to become "acting" president. She can then be acting president. Those reasons could be decorated by a Dan Brown (sans a frustrating format) unveiling a parliamentary government that would elect her as prime minister. All these grim scenarios will surely be elevated to the Supreme Court. This explains why only points of issues are being elevated in the order list of the new third justice.

What are the alternatives to these scenarios? Martial law? Military takeover? People power? God sakes! All these? Heaven help our country.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dbcfjan@gmail.com

A government of righteous men

THE PREACHER SPEAKS

His hands move. His fingers unravel and point. His voice booms. His sermon is not anything new to the parishioners, but he does it with panache. When he repeats himself, he repeats himself verbatim, entire paragraphs rolling out with teleprompter convenience.

His name is Eduardo Cruz Villanueva, 63, spiritual director and president of Jesus In Good (JIG) Church and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Philippines for Jesus Movement (PJM) and of the Zoe Broadcasting Network.

METHOD TO MADNESS

Patricio Evangelista

"And His training for the preachers of our beloved country."

He has been in evangelism for 30 years. His mission is to bring people to the kingdom of God. He claims he does not know his net worth, because he believes in the secret of God that "we should invest in heaven rather than in earth."

He first ran for president in 2004. He says he refused at first. The powerful Jesus-is-Lord Church had long been courted by various political leaders. "I'm not stupid to know my comfort zone when the President of the Philippines, the Vice President, the Speaker of the House, and even almost all political leaders in this country wanted to come to our house just to be friendly to me." When he decided to run, he said all he had was "my passionate love for the country and the millions of people supporting us."

He knows why he lost. He was cheated, he says. Unanticipated events still bite him: he was sick and took with the Erap Estrada Muslim following.

Now he runs again, smiling in his commercials, shaking hands in Cebu, speaking of himself in the third person with the confidence of a British royal. The fabric Villanueva administration "will be free of unrighteousness and wicked-ness."

He believes the failure of the Filipino people "to elect a righteous leadership has led the country to a vicious cycle of traditional politics. The power of Malacañang behind a righteous leader is genuinely what will change the nation. On his first day of office, he promises to sign a presidential declaration declaring God for his election.

He believes in separation of church and state. I'm not beholden to any religious economic power; to any religious power; to any foreign-based interest."

He brushes aside fears of religious biases.

"I have no religious biases. I have no religion; you may be surprised. I hate discrimination, as a full-blooded democrat."

The full-blooded democrat says he believes in the Constitution—"written in conviction God's law." He derives discrimination, he says, and generosity allows that homosexuals are also loved by God. "I have to really share with them the resurrection of moral and righteous fibers of man's existence." All who follow Jesus are "children of God," he said helpfully.

Or reason allow them "to commit sexual relations day and night" without warning them.

"They need sympathies. Not condemnation. They need proper guidance rather than ignore them. It is my duty to God. It is my duty to them. It's my duty to the country."

Bradley Nalupta, his running mate, said: "I believe that even God, when he created the entire universe—the entire earth, including the earth—it took him planning. So God himself is a God of planning. And therefore, we people, as extended beings, should learn how to plan." He will expand the RH (Reproductive Health) bill, he says, until he finds something to do with it. He has been known as a moderate to believe the Muslims' insurgency must be dealt with. "Muslims have been a victim of injustices. That's why Hon. Ahmad said the reason why he decided to run for governor in Sulu under our party is because, he said, he knows all those political leaders and only Brother Eddie is credible among them."

Asked about his stand on the Visiting Forces Agreement, he hesitates, then answers in the broadest possible terms.

"As I have said many times, we will have a serious, comprehensive review of all treaties entered into by the Philippine government with and in view of improving the benefits for our country and without sacrificing, of course, our dignity as a sovereign nation. We will review to see if they are mutually beneficial based on mutual respect. What I'm saying is that, I will see to it that any treaty entered into should be improved if necessary and be amended if necessary just to maximize the benefits of our people and at the same time, without sacrificing the supremacy or dignity of the Filipino people before the eyes of international community."

Asked again, he says he supported the 1991 removal of bases. "Basi mas the U ... a ... ation do we call this? Well, your question is the Visiting—"

The question is repeated, "Are you for or against the Visiting Forces Agreement?"

"I—As I have said, since I'm the president, I will have an open mind to review it with absolute desire to maximize the benefits of the Filipino people."

He is asked three more times. He wants to be serious in the review of all treaties. He wants to harness the brightest minds in the nation. No exceptions should be made when reviewing treaties. He is a man of God with the demeanor of a politician, a businessman whose he stands on American presence in the Philippines.

The preacher stands as an odd player. He hates to God and Constitution, but only when the Constitution agrees with God. He claims no religious biases, and yet discriminates on the basis of his religion. He claims he is a democrat who obeys principles of democracy, but he wants the country to adopt homosexuals on their sin. He announces his credentials—activist, academic, constitutionalist, professor—with the panache of a game show host, and yet is unable to form an opinion on the least contentious Philippine treaty, claiming he needs "the nation's brightest minds" to review the issue.

Before he runs, however, they interrupt and the sequence of Church and State. What it simply means is that the State is prohibited from establishing a state religion and from using public funds in promoting any particular religion, for its right in this. There is nothing stopping the religious lobby from shouting intensively at, say, Ang Ladlad—that there is everything in the law stopping the Commission on Elections from including it in the party-list election. What Villanueva unable to understand is his ability to discern secular from religious. Councils were born religious.

"I know in my heart—and my friends know me—I fear no one except God and sins, and therefore, I sincerely beholden to God and to the Filipino people."

When the voice of God disappears with the voice of the people, it is clear to which sound the cut of the preacher is tuned.

Who do we blame?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THAT'S RIGHT, BLAME THE INTERNET IN BLACK the same way our parents blamed disco dancing, rock music, triple-C bids, the Beatles, hippies and drugs for the "breakdown" of morality in our time. Parents will always be shocked by the "loose" morals of the young, especially their children, and they will always look for outside sources of "blame."

In my childhood, my parents barred us from watching Elizabeth Taylor movies because they thought that her multiple marriages made her a "bad" example. By the time I reached my teens, the targets had shifted to rock music, drugs and "violent parties." But the adults I knew never took the time (or had the guts) to talk to me about sex, and when I did broach a question, looked at me with such horror that I was sure I'd done something bad happened to prompt my curiosity.

Now it's the Internet and cell centers. This, in the wake of news that health authorities are increasingly alarmed at the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS, not only among the usual populations at risk, but also among young adult professionals, including those working in call centers.

Call center agents are understandably upset at the "labeling," protesting that they are no more prone to HIV infection than the rest of the population. They point to the young, upwardly mobile professionals they have become in fact (even cited as one of the "predisposing factors" for a possible HIV epidemic).

But we must take note that the "call center lifestyle" has many elements that may have an impact not just on employees' sexual health but on their physical, emotional and overall health as well: the late and odd hours, the rapid shuffling of shifts, the stress and frustration, the anonymity, and the sense of living in a bubble shut off from the rest of the world.

* * *

BUT I'm inclined as well to search for other reasons we are facing the onset of an epidemic. Someone who is now living with HIV (and want to work for a call center) says that he wasn't fully aware of the risks he faced solely for indulging his "lifestyle." And if we pushed terms and young adults today I would bet that quite a number of them would admit to ignorance about sexually transmitted diseases as well, and not just about HIV.

Instead of blaming the Internet, maybe parents should look at closer sources, like the quality of communication they have with their children, and their openness about sex. Maybe they should also ask schools if they provide quality, age-appropriate sexuality education. Maybe it's time we asked ourselves: Are we empowering the young to get all the information they need so they can lead happy and fulfilled lives and protect themselves as well?

* * *

I DON'T know if it's a still showing in theaters, but I would urge everyone to try and catch "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus." It's Terry Jones as Heath Ledger's last film, even if he failed to complete it, the way of his many co-stars (Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell in an extraordinary show not just of star power but of generosity and gallantry.

But to me, I thought the film important because it's the latest work of Terry Gilliam, whose movies are not easy to watch or understand, and they are filled with astounding, outlandish images, mind-bending themes and fantastic "imaginarium" for the left.

The film is much like the "imaginarium" it self, a traveling circus act replete with a cosmic in a trance, an engineer with Jeepney doll looks, an earnest barker in Shirley's costume, and even a midget. It is also filled with the spectacular glitter galore, including a "magic" mirror, all housed in a battered, shabby van.

Dr. Parnassus (Christopher Plummer) is a mystic who sells a deal with the devil, Nick (Tom Waits in a suave, sinister London banker persona) that requires him to deliver souls to Satan, including his own daughter, in exchange for immortality. But "Percy" is given a chance to redeem himself as he gives the subjects a chance to choose between "good" and "evil" inside the "imaginarium" of their minds.

The arrangement proceeds apace until Valentina (Lily Cole), the doctor's daughter, turns 16 and the Devil demands his due. It's also around this time that the motley crew of the imaginarium meets up with "Tony" (Ledger), whom they find semi-drunk and hanging from a bridge.

* * *

WHO is Tony, or more important, what is Tony and what does he have to do with the goings-on in the imaginarium?

While the film offers up meditations on love will, choice and character, it also explores the complex mind of Terry Gilliam, when he comes the director, bringing the many aspects of his personality—romantic and idealist (Depp), money-grubber (Law) and deceiver (Farrell). While Ledger does imprint Tony with mystery and contradiction, the character is also the one who projects it converts his reputation as an actor of depth.

In a surreal, though, the movie can cause nausea and confusion. The producers also helpfully provide subtitles, even if the dialogue is to English, because the various accents and the characters' speed with which the characters speak can sometimes be unintelligible.

It is never easy to watch a Gilliam film, on the eyes or on the mind. One leaves the theater wanting from the onslaught of ideas and images. But more than anything, I left "rattled." Rattled, one leaves feeling like someone had pried open one's skull and shoved in often sublime and feelings. It was a gamble making this film and I for one am thankful to Heath Ledger—and his friends in the industry—for giving "imaginarium" the power of their stardom in bring it to fruition.

* * *

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A year of US-China discord?

WORLD VIEW

Leo Abruzzese and David Gordon

NEW YORK—IN 2009, FORBES MAGAZINE named US President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao the "world's most powerful people." In 2010, we will discover that neither has the power to keep US-Chinese relations on track. That is bad news for those who believe that US-Chinese cooperation is essential for reviving the global economy, meeting the challenge of climate change, containing threats of nuclear proliferation and managing a host of other global challenges—and will be done time to come.

Yes is the number to watch: America's 10 percent unemployment and China's projected 10 percent GDP growth. Each country's economic problems promise a storm. American populism will mean Chinese pride. And the favored political climate created by the US mid-term elections means that the world's most important bilateral relationship is headed for real trouble—and possibly a crisis.

America and China now live with a kind of mutually assured economic destruction, and both presidents know it. America needs China to finance its growing debt, and China needs American sales to buy its products.

Indeed, the short, sharp shock that China absorbed from the financial crisis has proven that its economic growth still depends on consumer demand in the United States and Europe—and will be for some time to come. Chinese leaders would like to shift China's growth model toward greater reliance on domestic consumption, but that is a long-term project. In the meantime, Beijing knows that will depend on local manufacturers to create the jobs that protect both China's development goals and the Communist Party's monopoly on domestic political power.

Fear of declining incomes and lost wages pushed China's government last year to launch a massive stimulus program to protect jobs and assure growth. It worked. China, with much less exposure than the West to toxic banking assets, is still the main engine of growth in the global economy.

In a recent five WSJ, 60 percent of US respondents named China as "the world's leading economic power," but 27 percent chose America. To be sure, an unusual 10 percent is undecided, but job growth usually takes longer to reverse. As long as voters are worried about their welfare, Democrats and Republicans will compete to defend American products. In the next election, the country's 25 lawmakers will demand that the country with 10 percent unemployment promote the country with 10 percent growth to stop bending rule-rules and manipulating the value of its currency.

China's leaders have their own fears. They want to know why free-market champions in Washington are threatening more protectionism. For, as China's growth accelerated, trade imbalances bought US Treasuries and other dollar assets, which in turn lowered US borrowing costs and helped fuel asset bubbles. Now, China's leaders want to know why these assets are losing value.

Chinese leaders are in no mood to play the scapegoat, still see surging national pride to believe their position and strengthen their hand in negotiations. The Chinese government has invested heavily in recent years in state-owned companies and privately owned "national champions," mainly to ensure that China profits from the push of its people's wealth as possible. To help them do more power because increase their market leverage, the government often boosts them at the expense of foreign competitors. Hostile US rhetoric and trade actions will give China's leaders an excuse to accelerate this trend.

The Chinese administration also wants China to share more of the burdens of international leadership. That includes helping America to apply pressure on countries like Iran, Sudan and Burma that continue to defy the will of the international community. It also

TALK *of the* TOWN

Please send feedback to: jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Edna Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

Harness local ecological knowledge

By Augustine Ignatius Dionisio

I MAINLY DEAL WITH reconstructing ecosystems in landforms highly altered by mining.

As an experience scientist (a "field" scientist), who has had very minimal association with the inner city birds (we left 34 years ago), it was a privilege to have been invited to provide some insights into an impressive anthropological study of the Tagalog community.

The study is being undertaken by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology Ateneo de Manila, and is headed by the Fundacion Santiago.

I went on a weekend trip on July 11-12, 2009 to Bayabas with Ana Labrador Ph.D. and the anthropology research team. The visit was to investigate the potential to harness the local ecological knowledge. I wanted to look into everyone training and experience to make it relevant to the people of Bayabas.

Home

First, I would like to illustrate in the simplest terms one of the fundamental working definitions of ecology. In my capital city of Canberra, we have the Australian National Museum in which there is a landscaped space in the corner called "the garden of Australian plants." In it the word "home" is written in 85 languages to show the richness in cultural diversity of that young nation.

I proposed I looked for the Tagalog word (Sabisaid). Therefore, the study of ecology is essentially investigating what makes a home for us or any living creature.

I am a member of the Society for Ecological Restoration International, a nonprofit organization whose members are actively engaged in ecologically-sensitive repair and management of ecosystems through an ensemble of broad areas of professional knowledge sets and cultural perspectives.

Sustainable ecosystem

One of the important developments in the field is the emergence now that traditional or local ecological knowledge of indigenous tribes and local communities has an important role in newly emerging models of sustainable agro-ecosystem management.

Rural people, particularly in less technologically advanced regions, depend on natural ecosystems e.g. local produce for their livelihood. The long-term use and sustainability of these ecosystems depends on—many economic managers—farmers' ability to manage.

Farmers have a wide range of skills in using these resources especially with their local common experiences and observations) skills. Ecologists extend plant-environment relationships and predictive knowledge of the interaction between the different plants, animals and other creatures with their surroundings.

Therefore, any understanding and interpretation are based on some explainable logic of supposedly general validity.

Sharing knowledge

To my pleasant surprise, I met so many people both in the town and in the surrounding farming areas who were quite willing to share their knowledge of the local edible plants.

To mention a few: the woman at the reception desk of the hotel; several of the old farm laborers; a woman [Marcos Bachique] living in a tin-guessing area; a tricycle driver; and of course the vendors in the "pabaguhit" (market).

Tasty dishes

Gathering this information makes for an interesting story of how people grow, harvest and cook those rare dishes, which I had the good fortune to savor. It is also useful in understanding the sustainable production of these food sources essential to community well-being.

The acquisition of this knowledge would enhance the profile of the region which has a strong potential for ecotourism.

The symbols of the town are already a good indicator of its uniqueness. There is the "pako" (fern) on the top left side and shells of rice. The vegetables, which hold pride of place in the hearts and minds of the Bayabas people, are the pako and "labog" (Chinese qv.). These grow quite abundantly in the foothills of Mt. Banahaw.

The first part of call to discover is the underutilized biodiversity is the paleoguide. We asked each holder's which the produce had come from and to my surprise, startling most of it is local.

Subsistence

Biodiversity is a many-faceted ordered term but very simply it means the variety of living species occurring in a particular area. It is widely accepted that people in rural areas of developing countries depend mainly on local natural resources for subsistence and health; mostly indicates the core of those resources.

The more we admire diversity and appreciate it, the more we realize we create direct benefits.

We had the opportunity to be accompanied by Tome Sombrero (77 years old, husband of Sonia, our informant) a keen hand who guided us up a track to the family plot in Barangay Bitaw to the Bahalana foothills.

Cornucopia of vegetables

I gained him on the plants that we came along the edge of the trail on our breathing walk. There was a cornucopia of indigenous and introduced vegetables.

To name a few: "gating-gati" or taro (Colocasia esculenta), "gabing pula" or ising, edible form e.g. pako (Athyrium esculentum), young leaves of "bamboong kabog" or camias (Alocasia esculenta), "bagbag" (Adenostemma mauritii), "sirum" (Mimosa diandra), "labong" or bamboo shoots (Phyllostachys qv.), "bayag alitan" (Curcuma longa), "katuli" (Asparagus cochinensis), "kamote" (Ipomoea philippinensis) and lemons (Lantana camara).

Mang Tome also pointed at many other herbs, grasses, shrubs and trees, at least 30 species, which have some other potential uses. There were also many more plant species along the perimeter of the narrow pathway.

Next generation

No one should move in the midst of such natural abundance? Without doubt, an anthropologist can do a very good job of thoroughly documenting and understanding the ethnobotanical knowledge of many of the older people and how this knowledge gets passed on to the next generation.

In most parts of the tropics, growing concern is economic but the losses are hardly used for cooking. The basic cook fits variety, Many cyanogenic plants (some 2,500 plants rich in cyanide-forming sugars have been documented) usually have higher levels of this toxin in young leaves as they have developed an effective deterrence against being eaten out of existence.

Natural toxin

It is only recently that this natural toxin was shown to cause severe poisoning as well as chronic illness due to prolonged exposure to sublethal doses.

Cyanide is a compound that strongly attaches to several metal complexes present in important proteins and interferes their biological functions.

Cassava, originally from Brazil, is an important and inexpensive carbohydrate food source in many developing countries including Indonesia.

Many people in these places have understood that cassava and other toxic plants require preparation (e.g. leaching or fermenting) before cooking which subsequently destroys the toxins.

This understanding has allowed the exploitation of these plants as a rich food source. This is a very good example of a traditional ecological knowledge. It shows the intelligence of people who have passed on this understanding of how to render an otherwise poisonous plant into one of the tastiest vegetable dishes of tropical Philippine cuisine.

Admittedly, I probably first ate labog six years ago from a previous visit and became aware that it was edible. It was a thrill to again eat this dish, cooked the way it should be by Tome and Sonia Sombrero.

On the walk back to the hotel, I was impressed by the numerous houses adorned by many ornamental plants. One specimen caught my eye as it had leaves form (Hyperric qv.). These are very slow-growing (1 cm/year), save plants found in Southeast Asian rainforest trees.

Relieving Alzheimer's

Several species synthesize chemicals which can alleviate some symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

There is an enormous pressure that unregulated and illegal harvesting of these plants in China for the herbal medicine market could push them to the edge of extinction.

I asked some of the authorities of the Philippine herbal medicine industry if he was aware of the existence of these species. He said "No!" One species that the Philippines produces prodigiously a compound huperzine, which can relieve symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

Herbal medicine

This provides food for thought in developing the local herbal medicine industry and in producing herbs and spices for the export market, which have been targeted as priorities for enhancement in lower-rural communities.

On our return from Alitao, I had a conversation with the tricycle driver who shared his love of climbing the forest. Mang Rudy's points which we could see on the horizon on the way back to the "baguio."

Frogs

He spoke of the joy he and his friends had derived from going on a summer hike, then camping overnight in these mountain tops. He recalled the meals they cooked from the frogs collected from pristine rivers, the edible insects they plucked to make satay and the time for admiring the awesome scenery.

Surely, these are evocative images which one percolate not only unforgettable joy to jaded people from these cities but also a dignified and long-term stationary for people in a place like Bayabas.

Mountaineers

On our way back to the hotel, we visited the headquarters of the Bayabas Mountaineers. It was a hive of activity and enthusiasm. I was impressed by their ability to articulate their appreciation of the richness of plants, fungi, animals and areas of cultural and religious significance associated with Mt. Banahaw.

It may be a pure comparison but we have to bear in mind the other pure which visitors provide. The opportunity for people to experience the majesty of the Philippine mountains.

I must also give credit to the very gracious and hospitable staff of the Mt Gate on Bayabas hotel where I stayed. One fine touch was the use of latex to emboss a pattern on the floor of the courtyard.

This further reinforced the strong sense of respect for and affinity of the locals with their natural heritage.

There is a major decline in rural populations due to poverty. Experts suggest that non-farm income streams have to be created to stem this tide. We can enhance the social capital inherent in local ecological knowledge and put it to good use in high-value sectors such as tourist-based ecotourism.

Chinese proverb

I make reference to a Chinese proverb which always makes me think despite of how we view changes in our world. "The sound of one tree falling is greater than the sound of a whole forest growing."

The negative sides too of noise as we disregard the subtle exuberance of life. If we discover how local communities have closely understood and passed on the knowledge of selecting inherently rare places and making them edible, then we can also apply the whole thinking process to mitigating wide-scale land and water degradation.

Untapped resource

The first suggest that there is an untapped resource of people who are still able to understand the untapped cues that regulate the patterns of life in the not rounding environment.

Last year's Nobel economics co-laureate, Elinor Ostrom, the first woman to win the prize in economics, expressed the need for more extensive investigation of efforts to operate natural resources.

The Indiana University professor of political science said her work focused topic in which communities around the world can manage resources needed for their survival.

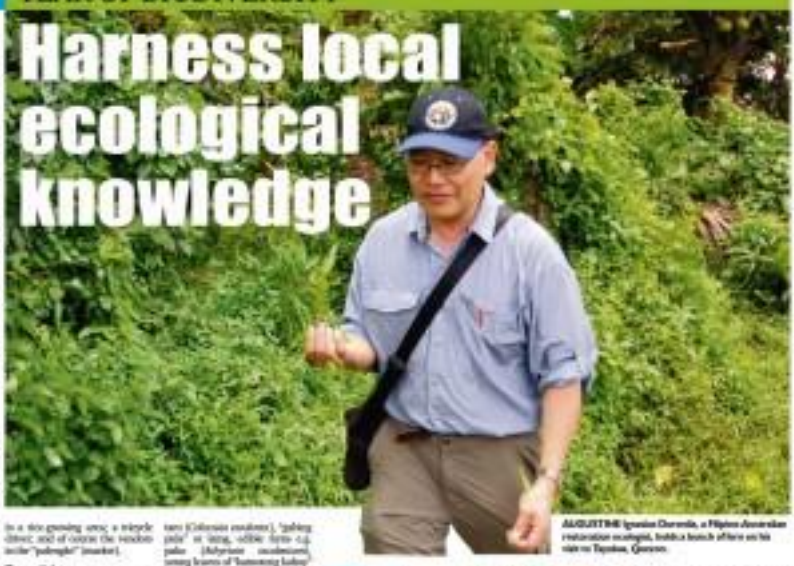
Repository

In other words, older people like Tatay Tome and Nanay Isabel are a precious repository of local knowledge which may disappear. It would be a pity to lose this wealth of human knowledge and source of human and ecological resiliency.

In this context, gathering and disseminating traditional and local ecological knowledge would be a valuable tool for guaranteeing sustainable agriculture practices.

It would ensure long-term food security and maintain the robustness of both the rural basin and the built ecosystems to which the community of Tayabas belongs, particularly because of the unpredictability in climate patterns which are apparent to those times.

Augustine Ignatius Dionisio Ph.D. is a research fellow, biogeochemist, restoration ecologist and practicing reclamation expert at the Analytical and Environmental Chemistry Research Group, School of Chemistry, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 Australia.



AUGUSTINE Ignatius Dionisio, a Filipino Australian restoration ecologist, holds a bunch of ferns on his visit to Tayabas, Quezon.

"LABOG" (Colocasia sp.) is among the vegetables that grow abundantly in the foothills of Mt. Banahaw.

"PAKO" (fern) salad

INQUIRER Mindanao

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nina R. Alcantara

Soldiers learn ways of waging peace

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer de Oro City

RAISING PLACARDS and shouting calls for government action, a handful of people picketed outside a town mayor's office to oppose the entry of soldiers into a hinterland village where a peasant leader was earlier killed.

Soldiers could be involved in the killing, the victim's son believes. The military, meanwhile, suspects that his peasant organization is being used by communist rebels to infiltrate the village.

Nothing conclusive was established about these perceptions which factored heavily in how the situation was considered and, hence, got muddled up.

It was a role playing exercise for 28 junior officers of the Army's 58th Infantry Division and three cadets of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in northern Mindanao who took the Operation Peace Course (OPCourse) late last year.

Conducted by the nongovernment Unity Mindanao International Center for Peace, OP Kiosi aims to popularize peace-building among different sectors and deepen initiatives for peace in Mindanao.

According to course director Leonardo Bautista, effective peace-building work requires the ability to discover things from the standpoint of other people so as to understand why they act or think the way they do.

"Solving a conflict entails that people should try to look at them from different perspectives," said Samarina Bedil, professor at Mindanao State University's Institute for Peace and Development in Mindanao (IPDM).

Bedil emphasized that a peace-builder must imbibe this attitude—which is developed by listening—to view the world beyond the prism of what one has been accustomed to and through many lenses.

Soldiers are trained to respond to conflict in a distinctly different way than peace advocates. But by embarking on peace-building work, they must put aside several opposition they have been conditioned to take, like fighting and achieving superiority of force, Bedil explained.

Bautista observed that owing to their respective mandates and organizational size, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the PNP are "very big enemies of insurgency" for managing conflicts in their areas of assignment before things get worse.

AN ARMY JUNIOR officer pours his mind into an exercise that teaches skills in waging peace.

'Winning the people'

The AFP's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) has been training its soldiers to become conflict managers since 2006, targeting 156 brigade and battalion commanders and executive officers, and 300 junior officers to learn the ropes of conflict management and peace building.

Eastmincom faces the challenge of dealing with the communist insurgency in the Caraga and southern Mindanao, and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which keeps community strongholds in North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sarangani.

By empowering soldiers to pursue peace-building initiatives, the command hopes to help the AFP develop more viable strategies for "winning the war by winning the people," said Col. Juliano Amito, the unit's chief for civil-military operations.

"Dead guinea seek audience (also). It is better to build than to destroy," said Amito, who was first the units and has been in military service for 30 years.

Soldiers, he said, must help build consensus on a shared future for the people in the communities.

Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, Eastmincom commanding general, stressed that "apart from clearing the villages of insurgents, it is important to gain the trust of the people."

The best measure of winning the people is enforced in localities "the community celebrates with us when we win," he said.

Privacy of dialogue

OP Kiosi graduates are expected to be knowledgeable about human rights and the international humanitarian law, including how these instruments interact with the duties of the unit's security forces.

They are also familiar with the concept of human security, which is a comprehensively broader and inclusive notion than the state-centered idea of national security to which current military and related policies are largely based.

In the course, they are introduced to the various avenues of peace-building work under the National Peace Plan.

For soldiers, playing an active role in pushing multidimensional initiatives for community development defines the new "battlefield." The core outcome is for OP Kiosi alumni to confidently apply the essentials of analyzing and dealing with conflicts, most especially during dialogues.

They are equipped with a general view of historical underpinnings of Mindanao's myriad conflicts, principally unresolved land claims.

Conditions persist

Given the "complex character" of the conflicts, Ferrer admonished that "there is no clear end to the insurgency in the near foreseeable future, it will only subside."

"The seeds conducive that make them (insurgency) thrive persist. Many villages still have no roads, no schools—situations that augment discontent or lack of presence of government," Ferrer noted.

"The military cannot resolve conflict; it will need political solution, I which, in turn, needs political will," he added.

Ferrer explained that the conflicts "can only be managed from getting worse and becoming violent or possibly violent."

As an example, Amito pointed to the flare-up of clan wars in villages in central Maguindanao. If left unattended, the may spread to other communities and drag MILF commanders into the scene, which can quickly spur AFP action.

Professional soldiers make credible conflict managers, Ferrer said, and fostering their corps would require condemning the lingering negative image associated with men in uniform.

He cited stories of abuses, such as "military checkpoints serving as extortion points."

Ferrer noted the social autonomy created by the counterinsurgency approaches adopted decades ago, such as unleashing anti-communist and anti-Moro militias and vigilantes. These have altered the meaning of the war and the way it was being waged, distant from the political goals of combined parties.

A hangover of this era could be the erosion the promotion of soldiers still profess fear among many people. In some areas, especially in MILF-influenced communities, the military is seen as an occupying force.

"You cannot transform an organization by issuing directives every day. It needs reorientation, deliberate efforts, not reactive initiatives," Ferrer pointed out.

"How the military becomes part of the solution is the leadership challenge," he added.

Modernizing the mindset

"We don't appear weak if we undergo the course," quipped Amito. It was a swipe at the generally macho culture of the defense establishment that is just by feeling militarist thinking in dealing with social conflicts.

"We become system builder and a responsible fighter. If we know that we are on the right track, the more we become skilful in conducting operations," he added.

Integrating peace building approaches into the modern mindset of the soldier will need vital reforms in the policy environment of the defense establishment.

He saw, deals sired enabling victory beyond enemy casualties, weapons captured and surrendered, and villages cleared of insurgent influence.

This will also trigger reforms toward a "balanced scorecard" as the basis of giving more for military service. "Insurgency prevention, human development and nation-building" are also equally rewarded.

The prospect of engaging to a far different arena but for a similar objective in lining up the 15th batch of OP Kiosi cadres. By pulling primacy on the people's interest, Capt. Herbert Dayrit recalled the words of a peace-builder "is the true picture of being a public servant."

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Mayor sees win vs GMA son in Bicol

SAN FERNANDO, Camarines Sur—The mayor of this fourth class municipality expressed confidence he could defeat the bid for another term as congressman of President Macapagal-Arroyo's youngest son, Diosdado Ignacio "Dato" Arroyo.

"Arroyo is not a Bicolano," said Fermin Matholo, this town's mayor.

Fermin a younger brother of Jaime Matholo, this town's former mayor who ran against Dato in 2007 and lost.

Fermin believes voters, this time, will vote for someone born by Bicolano.

The supporter of the governor's provincial, Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte, has added push to Fermin's candidacy.

Some officials, however, doubted Dato's work in the province's newly created second district, which is made up of seven towns, including this town.

"I am not a big fan of Dato, but in fairness to him, what he has accomplished in his two years in office... he surpassed his predecessors combined," said Carlo Bautista, provincial board member.

Advantage

It helps to be the son of the President. When Dato celebrated his birthday recently, Ms Arroyo was in town to announce a P1-billion dam and more projects coming the way of Dato's district.

Fermin, however, said voters around some walker that Dato is not a Bicolano and vote for someone who is.

Fermin said Dato's "tenure as representative for three years does not make him a Bicolano."

"In fact, he is always not around in our district," Fermin added. "Mora sanche ke silbidoras?"

He said he doesn't see his fight against Dato as one of a "David versus Goliath."

"Sarlan it is good versus evil," said Fermin.

3 congressmen Arroyos

If Dato won again, he said, there would be at least three Arroyos in the House of Representatives and that may "too much."

Ms Arroyo is taking the jabes of her eldest son, Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, as congressman in Tarlac's second district.

Daniel "Dong" Fernandez has been a "podrosong dayahan (powerful outsider)" in his district.

"Although he deserves it for being a presidential son, the way he is granted whenever he would visit our district is way too much... an overkill," said Fermin. "Therefore, he (Dato) is out."

Elsewhere in Camarines Sur, however, support for Dato has been making its presence felt.

Sympathies announcing the projects that he pushed but were funded with government money have sprouted all over.

Dato established residence in 2006 in Gibraltar, the most populous town of the province, so he could run for a House seat allowed for the seven town district.

He has been representing his Bicol district for three years now despite not being a three-blooded Bicolano.

Close fight

Dato's surge in prominence in Camarines Sur could be due to his full use of the advantage of being the President's son.

Hence the years of his tenure, he has virtually bombarded his district with projects ranging from shoram-shoram dipper and concreting of village high schools to road networks and irrigation systems.

Mayor Donna Nieves, president of this town and columnist of local weekly Voz Bikol, predicted a close fight between Arroyo and Dato.

"Sure has popularity, Fermin has Lllay's blessing," said Nieves.

Anica Cabrido Sobio, Inquirer Southern Luzon

RAINBOW MARKET
The new public market in Baguio City is a veritable rainbow as the facility should be. The market was painted by five local poor and vendors, integrating her positive styles foundations in the new design.

Iloilo province declares war on gambling

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE ILOILO provincial government has declared an all-out war against illegal gambling in various municipalities here.

Gov. Niel Tupas said he suspected that the rumors of the operations of illegal numbers games in the municipalities was being used to helping fund the campaign of some politicians.

Tupas said even small town lottery (STL) would not be spared from the campaign as the operations of the games remain unfit, were supposed to be confined to Iloilo City.

The Iloilo STL Gaming Corp. has secured a franchise to operate only in the city. The provincial government had denied the Tan's application to operate in the province and, therefore, its operations outside to franchise area is illegal, the governor said.

Tupas said STL is being used as "front" of illegal gambling operations in some municipalities. These operators hold drawn for daily double, an illegal numbers game.

He also warned the chiefs of police of these towns of severe penalties as he said the operations of the illegal numbers games would not be possible without the consent of the police and the local mayors.

The governor said he instructed Senior Supt. Sonnyo Gondraco, Iloilo Police Provincial Office director, to go after gambling operators, especially in six towns where betting on illegal numbers games were reported to be rampant.

The governor only named the municipalities of San Enrique, Cabatuan and Pavia as towns where the illegal numbers games were found to have resurfaced.

Gloria pours more projects into her turf

LUBAO, PAMPANGA—PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo continued pouring projects in her hometown of Lubao and other towns in the second district of Pampanga, where she is seeking the representation in the May 10 elections.

On Saturday, the President visited the 23-hectare mariculture reserve facility (MRF) in Barangay San Candido, here and gave away five charcoal briquette making machines to the Lubao town government.

Ms Arroyo, who was accompanied by environment officials, pitched the importance of supporting the government's efforts to address the impact of climate change in her conversation with village officials.

Ms Arroyo, who arrived at 10:48 a.m., greeted well-drunk hands with residents and officials gathered in the village. She did not deliver a speech and left at 11:28 a.m.

QUEEN Gloria, this man appears to tell President Macapagal-Arroyo as he places the President's hand on his forehead during one of Ms Arroyo's frequent visits to Pampanga, her home province. PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

She last visit to Lubao was on Jan. 23, when she opened a renovated school building. Saturday's visit was her fifth in Pampanga in January.

Environment Secretary Lucien Quisumbing said a charcoal briquette making machine turns dried leaves, twigs, grass and other solid wastes into charcoal.

He said charcoal made from recycled materials is cheaper but is as efficient as regular charcoal. Quisumbing said the machine has been distributed to other towns in the province.

The machine, he said, costs P163,000 each and could produce 500 kilograms of charcoal daily. A kilogram of charcoal briquettes sells for P30.

Quisumbing said Ms Arroyo had distributed 14 machines to Pasig City Occidental Mindoro, Aklan and Pampanga.

Two other machines will be turned over to the second district towns of Sta. Rita, Floridablanca, Dinalupi and Porac and the third district town of Mexico next week.

Mayor Dennis Pineda said his town received five machines because some of the 14 villages here are far from the town center.

"It is costly [for residents to remove scrap] to go to Barangay Sta. Catalina only to turn their solid wastes into charcoal," he said. —Charlene Cepralyah, Inquirer Central Luzon

Ilocos cops on higher alert after another bet slain

MADDIKIAC, ILOCOS SUR— The top police official in Ilocos Sur has ordered policemen in the province to intensify the manning of checkpoints and intelligence gathering to prevent attacks on political candidates in the run-up to the May 10 elections.

Senior Supt. Eduardo Ungab, acting provincial police director, issued the directive following the Thursday murder of Cecilio Tolentino, 66, an independent candidate for councilor in this town.

Tolentino was the second candidate in the province who was murdered this year. On Jan. 6, Arsenio Tagalo, 53, a candidate for councilor in Sta. Maria town, was on his motorcycle when two men, on another motorcycle, shot and killed him.

One motive

Ungab said Tolentino was shot dead by two men on Thursday while he was talking to a relative in front of his house in Barangay Sta. Theresa here.

Lawyer Gerry Guzman, a mayoral candidate that Tolentino was supporting, believed the attack was related to politics.

"There is only one motive—politics. He... helped organize the [local] opposition group. He did not do anything other than that," Guzman said.

But Vice Mayor Alfonso Ferry Jr., husband of Mayor Aelyn Ferry, belied Guzman's claim that the local administration had something to do with Tolentino's murder.

"That is baseless. They should wait for the investigation before giving statements. I should be the most concerned because I am [Tolentino's] cousin, or relative here," Ferry said.

15 years of rule

He said he and Tolentino, his second cousin, had a good relationship.

Both said no political killings happened in the last 15 years that he and his wife alternately held the mayoral post in this town.

Ungab said police gathered candidates in the province recently to sign a peace covenant to stop attacks prompted by political rivalries.

In Bulacan, police and Commelec officials followed at least 15 candidates nearly rolling from ambushes or have police and private security aides during the election period. Leonilo Bubble Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon and Carmela Reyes-Refuyo, Inquirer Central Luzon

'Coke' thrown at sea finds way into local market—PDEA

By Joey A. Gabieza
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE PHILIPpine Drug Enforcement Agency in Eastern Visayas reported that cocaine, believed to be part of the P5 billion drug cache found in the waters of Samar last November, is now available in this city and in other parts of the region.

PDEA is now closely coordinating with different local government units and the Philippine National Police to conduct operations against the shabu which could be in possession of the illegal drug, according to Liza Inog, PDEA regional information officer.

"We are now in the recovery efforts as there are reports of cocaine in Tacloban and in other parts of the region like in Samar," Inog said.

Validated report

Reports that somewhere cocaine found its way in the local drug market were bolstered by the arrest of two men in Sta. Rita, Samar, who were busted allegedly selling a cocaine brick to undercover agents.

The men—Cabo Tapit, 33, and Adrian Abongan, 30—were caught on Jan. 9 in a buy-bust operation in Barangay Magsaysay, where Tapit lives, by members of the CIDG led by Insp. Bernardo Lim.

The two were caught in the act of selling the brick of cocaine, tightly wrapped in a plastic bag and weighing about one-and-half kg, with an estimated street value of P6 million.

Tapit, said to be an overseas worker, brought the cocaine from an "unidentified friend" in Eastern Samar, according to PO1 Stallan Sala, of the regional CIDG office.

A misrepresentation to said to be cocaine exposition from shabu, another crystalline like illegal drug. A kilogram of shabu could be bought for P200 while a kilogram of cocaine costs as much as P800, Inog said on Thursday.

Expensive poison

Inog said that from Dec. 23, 2009, to Jan. 24, 2010, the PDEA, police and the army recovered 281 cocaine bricks.

At least 50 of these bricks were burned in ceremonies witnessed by President Macapagal-Arroyo at the PDEA head office in Manila.

At least 22 more cocaine bricks are believed kept in the PDEA regional office here and would be destroyed as well.

Cocaine is considered to be one of the most expensive drug in the market with a single brick estimated to cost at least P5 million.

The value of the bricks of cocaine recovered by the PDEA in the waters runs placed close to P150 billion.

The bricks of cocaine that were found in the provinces of Eastern Samar and Northern Samar were said to have been thrown into the waters of Samar Island on purpose by a vessel passing through Philippine territory to avoid detection by the government.

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HUNGRY
In Negros, the rice that feeds communities owes it to the pesk. It may be the 23 or century, but people of Barangay Bunsol, Bacacay, still lend highest respect to the oldest who grow their crops.

Davao del Norte congressman sees Teodoro win in his area

TAGUM CITY—AN ADMINISTRATION CONgressman said he was confident retired General Teodoro, former defense secretary and Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard-bearer, would win in Southern Mindanao.

Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio Lagdameo said based on his consultations with economic and political leaders in three provinces in the region, Teodoro was emerging as the favorite candidate of the people.

Teodoro, Lagdameo said, would win in Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley, which form part of Southern Mindanao.

Voters in these provinces, said the congressman, "have only one presidential candidate in mind and that is Teodoro."

The three provinces have a combined voting population of at least 2 million.

Lagdameo said residents of his province and other areas in the region were concerned that Teodoro has what it takes to be a good president.

"Secretary Teodoro has proven his mettle in (during his tenure as defense chief," said Lagdameo, who is married to actress Irma Zaldarriaga.

Lagdameo said among the presidential candidates, "Teodoro has a clear plan on how to develop the (Mindanao) provinces and transform (it) into (an) economic growth."

"That's why the common people and (leaders) in the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley have rallied behind his banner," Lagdameo said.

In a statement, Teodoro said the "full trust and confidence" of Lakas members in his candidacy have not wavered.

He said there was no truth to rumors that a small faction in the Lakas-Kampi-CMD is looking for a "more winnable" presidential candidate. Jomella Rodolfo and Primante Dill, Inquirer Mindanao

GMA orders Agno dike done Feb. 14

ROSALES, PANGASINAN— President Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways to finish the second phase of the Agno flood control project on Feb. 14, earlier than its scheduled completion in March.

The project involves a series of diversion channels and dike protection projects from Alcala to Bayambang towns.

Valentines target

"Why not finish it on Valentine's Day? Anyway you can work 24/7," Mr. Arroyo told Philip Mirasa, project director of the DPWH's major flood control and drainage projects, who hosted her on the project's status.

Mr. Arroyo arrived in Barangay Carmen East here in the first leg of her flyover tour to inspect a newly restored portion of the Agno River dike devastated by Storm "Pepeng" in October last year.

In their briefing, Mirasa also told Mr. Arroyo that 10 sections of the north dikes along Agno, Bantile, Bued, Tayug-Dipalo and Cabaruan Rivers breached by the massive flooding had been restored.

The restoration project cost P902.6 million.

Stronger dike

But residents here asked Mr. Arroyo to build a stronger dike that would protect them from the rampaging waters of the Agno River that careless excavators tear from the foot Rogan Jimis.

Mayor Ricardo Revesa said he hoped the national government would build a permanent dike fortified with boulders and lined with gabion wires, as the earth dike would easily give way during heavy rains.

"We are hoping for a permanent structure that can control water releases by the dam," Revesa said.

During the briefing, Mirasa said the residents' request would be answered when the third phase of the Agno flood control project is implemented.

Foreign loan

The project, which will run from Alcala to San Manuel, is 47 kilometers long. But Mirasa said its construction could depend on a foreign loan that may be secured by the government.

The first phase of the project, which was in the river's downstream, included a bridge in Bugallon town and river channel that redirected the flow of the Agno River from Barangay Inlaoi to Bugallon. It Barangay Tombobo in Dagupan. It was completed in 2003. Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Awesome 5 days of 'fine tuning,' renewal for RP priests

From page A1

AWESOME SIGHT Clad in white chasubles and cream-colored stoles, 5,342 priests and bishops end their five-day Second National Congress of the Clergy with a huge concelebrated Mass at the Cuneta Astrodrome in Pasay City on Friday. The Mass was led by Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales and Archbishop Marco Octaviano, the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

represented 90 percent of all priests, both diocesan and religious, nationwide. There aged 38 to 88 were the biggest age group represented. A number of foreign priests also participated in the 1WCE II. There are about 8,000 foreign priests serving in the Philippines.

For five days, from Jan. 25 to 29, the priests focused on travel, personal and spiritual renewal, and renewed commitment. It is evident this gathering that was closed to outsiders, Media were allowed in only at the opening and closing. The program covered prayer and liturgy, confessions, group reflection, faith sharing and community building. Time was also provided for interaction with lesser families.

Inspiration

The congress, with the theme "Pastoleliness of Christ, Shepherd of Priests," is the highlight of the celebration of The Year of Priests of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Pope Benedict XVI has declared the period June 2009 to June 2010 The Year of Priests in commemoration of the 150th death anniversary of their patron saint, St. John Mary Vianney.

The saint's sacred relics, consisting of a stole and breviary, were flown in from France to provide inspiration for the assembly. (The relics will be taken to the 16th Mary Mother Eucharist in Barangay Cembo, Makati, tomorrow.)

Bishop Jesse, Monsignor Capuchin Fr. Romeo Convocation, who preaches to the papal household, was the congress' main preacher.

Celibacy is a gift

For his last address, Convocation tackled the theme of priestly celibacy an issue that has wracked the Church throughout the world. The "first National Congress of the Clergy in 2004 also held amidst the furor over revelations of the priestly vow.

"Man is not determined by heterosexuality," Convocation said. "We are determined by our vocation."

And celibacy is closed to the final vocation, which is union with Christ, he said.

"We don't bring offspring into the world but rose to a higher and fertile state of life. We enhance the quality of life. Celibacy gives us vantage to it, it should not be a burden. Celibacy is not just a command, it is a charism; a gift we have received," he said.

It is not an act of renunciation for priests to feel proud about but something exercised with humility, freedom and joy, Convocation reminded the priests.

He said priests have to "feel from images." Citing the Internet and television as channels to celibacy, he said priests must see the world with the eyes of Jesus.

"God created the eyes, but he also created the eyelids to cover them," he remarked, to much laughter.

Several bishops and lay people also addressed the congress.

Jeans and cell phones

The youth-inspiring priests were not much different in appearance and dress from their lay counterparts. Many wore jeans and T-shirts. A few took the trouble to dress and looked stylish in black denim with Roman collar or in casual burning. Very few wore the long religious habit. Many were in sandals and running shoes and almost everyone lugged backpacks, shoulder bags, tote bags or shopping bags.

A few younger priests sported long hair and jeans suits, but the majority had regular haircuts. Many were graying and balding. Younger priests seemed the spiritual ones.

During breaks, they engaged in their most common of Filipino activities—eating or talking on their cell phones.

At the PITC main lobby they shopped for religious books or souvenirs like pictures, T-shirts and ball pens, or for priest's use in sacred chasubles and other vestments. They bargained for what they bought.

Asked to contribute to the success of the Holy Year activities, the priests dug into their pockets. The collection reached almost P2 million.

Like family celebration

"This is like a family celebration," said Jesuit theologian Fr. Catalino Arevalo.

"There is nothing that can substitute for the experience of being together, he added.

"Together the priests experienced their priesthood in a special way, and received grace in a special way. It was forth a human and Christian experience," he said.

The was what made the congress special, he said.

Standing ovation

The benefited, in-service-titled Commissioner was given a standing ovation at the end of his final talk.

He was mobbed by many of the young priests who jostled one another to take his photo with their camera phones.

Arevalo described Cardinalhimself with whom he has worked at the International Theological Commission in Rome, as "brilliant with lots of human experience. He is a genuinely holy man."

Said Fr. Roderick Salazar of the Society of the Divine Word: Fr. Convocation spoke from the heart. 'You know he has lived what he is talking about."

Emotional experience

For many, the closed-door penitential rite and confession during the retreat was an emotional experience.

For Fr. Paul Jund, a Mandaue missionary, the experience moved him to be more intimate with Christ and strengthened his fidelity.

Fr. Boni Pamugpasan, an Indian Mandaue missionary and native of young communities, was amazed by the experience.

For Lipa's Fr. Hermogenes Quimbabo, 46 years a priest, the experience "will make me love my parishioners more."

Creatures of the Spirit

"It had a deepening effect Fr. Cantalamessa's talk on celibacy made deeper sense. Celibacy is not a deprivation. It is a call, a gift," he said, adding that he will have a lot to share with the communities he is home.

In his homily, Cardinal Rosales spoke of priests as "creatures of the Spirit."

"Like icons, we have been branded. We have been claimed. Have vanished not being completely to God. There is an founder of ownership. We are owned and have to surrender. Our fidelity should go beyond observance of law and duty," he said.

He also touched briefly on the coming elections, telling "How do we help the Filipinos to be committed to what is good?"

Bishop Pierantonio Gerezim, head of CBCP's Commission on the Clergy, said Fr. Cantalamessa fed the priests in focusing on the three important elements of the priesthood—the Eucharist, the sacrament of reconciliation and love, also described as a special relationship with Jesus.

He said Cantalamessa also warned against "frenetic activism."

Only in RP

Cantalamessa was quite impressed by the turnout, even whelmed by the sight of so many priests in one gathering, according to Hero Love de Silva, the country's former undersecretary to the Vatican who was overall coordinator of the preparations for the congress.

"It's only in the Philippines can these things happen," he Villa quoted Cantalamessa as saying.

"You not comparing since such plans has to see grace. But the retreat called in France gathered only 1,500 priests and that was an international event, there was a national one, and there was some similar congress priests), we gathered 5,342," De Villa told reporters.

The attendance was so large that the organizers ran out of information kits and had to order more. Many groups and individuals—including schools and services—gave large donations.

Many parishes, religious houses and private homes provided lodging for the priests from outside Metro Manila.

Asked if the end of the congress signals another three years before they would come for the SCCR, the priests steamed with a loud "Yes!" With a report from Doris Pascual Inquirer.

Pinoys brush teeth less or use less toothpaste

From page A1

s decline in toothpaste use among the usually hygiene-conscious Filipinos.

"Maybe people aren't brushing their teeth as much as before or they're using less toothpaste when they brush their teeth," Prebo said. "I don't know how that happened."

He noted that economic conditions could have affected the disposable income of households, making Filipinos cut back about their personal hygiene just to save money.

Last year, toothpaste consumption in the Philippines fell by 13 percent. Hapee's sales fell by more, he said, declining even by nearly here much.

"Last year was really challenging because of the economic downturn, and the prices of those products it is very harder for us to compete," said Prebo, president of Hapee manufacturer Unilever Corp. To stay competitive, Hapee prices were also cut to as much as 6 to 8%.

Aside from denting domestic demand, he said the biggest competitive threat had also catalyzed the emergence of buying the entire supermarket shelf space, ensuring maximum exposure on the aisles.

Multinationals

"It's really hard to compete with these multinationals. We can't match the kind of resources they have at their disposal," Prebo said. "We're trying to survive. The keys is to make ourselves more efficient, be conscious of cost, and spend money in developing the people inside the company."

Despite the challenges in the past year, he said Hapee Toothpaste remained one of the leading brands in the country. Even with the drop in sales, the company's market share remained a comfortable 20 percent of the industry—a remarkable feat considering that before Hapee's entry in 1998, foreign firms controlled the entire market.

But Hapee Toothpaste executive was no longer solely focused on breaking the multinational toothpaste monopoly in the Philippines. Lawmakers, which visited out as the major supplier of aluminum collapsible toothpaste tubes for Colgate's local distributor, now wants to export more of its own toothpaste around the world.

He said Lamoiyan was planning to tap new export markets in Asia, even as the world's vast economic powerhouses.

"We're looking at Australia, Australians of Southeast Asian Nations (the zone for exports," Prebo said, referring to lower cost markets like the United States and Europe. Shipping products to India, the second most populated country in the world, is also seriously being considered.

Lamoiyan already exports to markets like Micronesia, Cambodia, Brunei, Papua New Guinea and some parts of the Middle East and some parts of Europe. Hapee products can also be found in many supermarkets shelves in the United States.

The company's advantage, according to Prebo, is its flavored toothpaste products, which have been considered best-sellers in international markets.

"We are unique because we have flavored fruity flavors which sell well with kids in other countries," he said. Hapee Toothpaste flavors include strawberry, grape, pineapple and mango.

Plans to go public

To fund these aggressive expansion plans, Prebo said a possible initial public offering could be on the horizon if market conditions continue to improve.

"Going public has always been in our plans. Once a company grows to one size and gains the reputation we have, it has to go public," he said. "We're ready to go public anytime."

Going public will make Lamoiyan the second Philippine personal care company to be listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange, the first being Unilever.

Prebo said Lamoiyan, which also manufactures dishwashing soap brand Date and feminine wash Femfine, also plans to introduce a new suite of new personal care products.

"The year ahead is hopeful for the economy so we're limited

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	GANITO TAYO NOON Dec. 31, 2000	GANITO TAYO NGAYON Dec. 31, 2009	BETTER LIVES
Barangay electrification	80.1% electrified	**99.39% electrified**	• With electrification comes better quality of life and progress
Water for waterless municipalities	432 priority waterless municipalities as of 2000	**113 priority waterless municipalities as of 2000**	• 350 waterless municipalities were provided with water under President Arroyo's term • Better quality of life • Improved sanitation
Textbook to student ratio	1:5 in 2000	**Elementary = 1:1 for English and Filipino High School = 1:1 for English, Math, and Science**	• Improved quality of education
Teachers' salaries	P9,699 for Teacher 1 in 2000	**P14,190 for Teacher 1 in 2009**	• 43% wage increase • Motivation for teachers • Able to recruit and keep quality educators
Technical vocational training	556,232 graduates in 2000	**1,903,785 graduates in 2009**	• More jobs
Classrooms	221,651 classrooms as of 2000	**323,684 classrooms as of 2009**	• **100,000** new classrooms built under President Arroyo's term • Provided a better learning environment
Classroom to Students ratio	1:60	**Elementary = 1:38 High school = 1:35**	
High school educational assistance	264,615 Educational Contract grantees for SY 2008 - 2009	**108,000 Educational Contract grantees for SY 2009- 2010 313,971 beneficiaries under GASTPE educational voucher system as of Dec 2009**	• Better access to secondary education
Food for School Program	None	**11.3 million beneficiaries from 2004-2009**	• Incentive to stay in school
Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	None	**1 million household beneficiaries**	• Provided poor families with cash for health and education
KALAHI-CIDSS program	None	**5,555 barangay beneficiaries as of June 2009**	• Benefited 1.14 million households • Social development through community projects • Empowered poor communities
PhilHealth membership	29.6 million beneficiaries as of 2000	**83.34 million beneficiaries as of July 2009**	• Delivered quality healthcare to more Filipinos
Botika ng Barangay	None	**15,000 outlets**	• Affordable medicine made accessible
Low-cost housing for resettled families	None	**85,805 families affected by priority infrastructure projects**	• Better homes
Government housing	Ramos: 203,691 housing units built Estrada: 96,265 housing units built	**294,995 housing units built**	• President Arroyo built nearly as much as the two previous presidents combined • More houses for the poor • Stimulated the housing and construction sectors
Housing interest rates	12% interest rate for P100,000 housing loan	**6% interest rate for up to P400,000 housing loan**	• Cut interest rates in half to encourage home ownership • Made homes more affordable • Stimulated the housing and construction sectors
Pag-IBIG calamity loans for Ondoy and Pepeng victims	None	**P12 billion**	• Provided financial relief to residents of disaster-stricken areas

Social development projects provide better lives for the poor

The successful Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of the Arroyo administration is considered to be an "answered prayer" to the poorest of the poor.

The 4Ps provide cash grants to poor families to improve their health, nutrition, and children's education.

One of the beneficiaries is Milagros Barroga and her family. When they were included in the 4Ps, her hopes and dreams to provide a better future for her children came true.

That was the start of a better life ahead for them.

The help that 4Ps has been extending to her family is what she's most grateful for. "Hindi na ako nag-alala sa kakainin ng mga anak ko. Nakakapagluto na ako ng arroz caldo. Nagpapagamot ko na rin si Jonathan kung insistake siya ng asthma niya," she said.

She said that it is difficult to find a job for college undergraduates like her, but 4Ps has been providing for her family and her fellow beneficiaries. She is even more inspired to help in organizing parents and building a more responsible community for the children.

The beneficiaries continue to increase. Since it began in 2007, the 4Ps program has already benefited 1 million households nationwide.

Another project, the KALAHI-CIDSS program, has helped local government in reducing poverty and engaging the lowdrok in community development.

Flora Lacibal of Bgy. Salasang, Arkan, North Cotabato, said through the program, her community was able to put up a health center.

"Dahil sa P3 million na pondo na galing sa programa ni pinsana ni Pangulong Gloria n a KALAHI-CIDSS, nakapagpatayo kami ng isang health center nung 2004. Hindi na namin kailangan bumiyahe ng hanggang 80 kilometro para makapagpagamot," she said.

KALAHI-CIDSS was piloted in Dolores, Quezon in 2002 and is now implemented in 5, 555 barangays nationwide.

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

MUST LOVE DOGS

Not a dog pound but animal shelter

By DJ Yap

AT THE FIRST SIGHT OF VISITORS, SAUCER, A LARGE MALE Rottweiler, lets out a succession of bow-wows and throws himself against the wire cage with such force the cage wobbles.

Soon, the other dogs in the Mandaluyong City Animal Shelter start a wave of barking and yipping.

Unlike them, Saucer's fate is a lot worse than his bark. In fact, of all the dogs in the facility, only his cage is securely locked as a precaution.

"He can really do a lot of damage," said veterinarian Louie Encarnacion. He recalled an instance when Saucer had been freed from his cage and proceeded to walk and chase everyone in the compound, with an apparent intent to maul.

"We quickly ran out and just watched him for hours. He only stops [only] when he tired himself out," said Encarnacion, who heads the new shelter located on Shaw Boulevard in Addition Hills, a few steps metres from where the old dog pound used to be.

A few months ago, a problem dog like Saucer would have been put to sleep in the city pound as a matter of routine.

Not anymore.

Mandaluyong City has adopted a kinder, more humane policy toward stray dogs, and has permanently stopped the practice of euthanasia. This necessitated the conversion of the city "pound" into an "animal shelter," where stray dogs are cared for and put up for adoption, Encarnacion said.

Difference

"The difference between a pound and a shelter is that in a shelter, the animals are no longer subject to euthanasia," he said.

The shelter has about 50 dogs, mostly strays picked up and caught by dog catchers after teams around the city circuit. Before a week, Saucer's owner took him to the shelter when he became unmanageable.)

The dogs are housed in large wire cages in a roofed structure elevated from the main compound. The place is well ventilated, with low walls and open spaces allowing the breeze to flow through. One or two dogs can occupy a cage, depending on the size of the animal. Mothers, especially aggressive ones, are kept in separate cages, as are the young ones.

Compared to the old pound, life at the shelter is paradise.

In the past, an average of 10 dogs were turned with a lethal dose [potion] injected every week; the dogs didn't even have time to get used to their surroundings.

"We only kept them for a maximum of three days, and put them to sleep if no one claimed them. In the 10 they're eleven. The

NOT A DOG POUND HERE. TENDER, loving care for stray animals at Mandaluyong facility. (DJ YAP PHOTO)

Winthrop:
a pioneer in providing quality healthcare

Winthrop has a long and varied history which spans decades of acquisition and growth. The older generation of physicians knew well the Winthrop name and its legacy.

The history began with Winthrop Chemical Company Inc. which was formed by Sterling Remedy Company in 1919 to manufacture pharmaceutical preparations. It later changed its name to Winthrop Laboratories and brought notable products to the US market.

After its merger with Frederick Stearns and Company, Winthrop Stearns Inc. was formed. It then became known as Sterling Winthrop Pharmaceuticals with the merger of Winthrop-Stearns and Sterling Drug.

Winthrop was instrumental in the area of anesthesiology and in developing medicines to combat malaria, as well as other widely-used products and innovative pharmaceuticals.

Sanofi, a French company, acquired the prescription drug operations of Sterling Winthrop in 1994 and the new company became known as Sanofi-Winthrop. Due to mergers in later years, the name Winthrop gave way to the birth of new company names: Sanofi-Synthelabo and its present name - sanofi-aventis.

Winthrop in the Philippines traces its beginnings in the pre-war period when it was known as Winthrop Stearns Inc. In the 80's, it became known as Sterling Products International, Inc., with the pharmaceutical operations handled by the Winthrop Division and the OTC products managed by the Sterling Division. The company was also known as Winthrop-Sterling. When Sanofi totally acquired Sterling Winthrop in 1996, Sanofi Winthrop was formed. The subsequent mergers produced sanofi-aventis.

An advocacy for excellence in medical education

In the Philippines, Winthrop started an advocacy to promote academic excellence in medicine. The prestigious Winthrop Scholarship Program, which was introduced in 1920, was overseen by top medical students from UP, UST, USPHMC and the Cebu Institute of Medicine.

For decades, Winthrop also provided scholarship grants to top students of various dental schools and gave grants to fellows in support of their scientific papers.

Winthrop's new focus on generics

Well aware of the legacy and reputation of Winthrop and its predecessors, sanofi-aventis has embarked on a new venture - to manufacture and market generic medicines, following the Group's quality standards.

Winthrop Pharmaceuticals Philippines, Inc. was launched in October 2007 to improve the health of Filipino patients by making affordable, quality medicines more accessible.

The pioneering spirit lives on in Winthrop as it continues to make available quality medical solutions to more patients, for less.

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Police team uncover 'shabu' lab in Parañaque; 3 nabbed

By Nina Calleja

THREE CHINESE NATIONALS, including a Hong Kong resident who had been the object of a manhunt by law enforcement and alleged drugs kingpin, were arrested in a raid on an alleged shabu laboratory hostels a subdivision in Parañaque City on Friday.

Senior Supt. Alberto Valdez, Parañaque police chief, said a raid conducted by the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (ADSOTF) at around 5 p.m. on Friday led to the arrest of Chi Ko Tang, 37; Wong Shing Pan, 47; and Li A Ging, 29.

Chu, also known as Tsui Lun and Ah Tung, is a Hong Kong national who reportedly escaped arrest in Malaysia sometime in 2004.

The ADSOTF team raided the house kept by the three along Cecilia Cruz Drive in BF Homes after obtaining a search warrant issued by Judge Adlo Bonifacio of Paranaque Regional Trial Court Branch 195.

Police confiscated an undetermined amount of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), rare chemicals and apparatus used in manufacturing illegal drugs, and drug paraphernalia. A Glock pistol and a fire hand grenade were also recovered from the scene.

The ADSOTF had been monitoring the movements of the three suspects for several months before the raid.

Neighbors of the suspects could be unaware that group of shabu, many being smuggled in a "kitchen type" laboratory inside the house, Valdez said.

UNITY RUN
Hundreds of police, army personnel and members of religious organizations join the unity run for credible and orderly elections dubbed "Takbo Para sa Pilipino, Manyo at Mapayapang Halalan 2010" held yesterday morning from Camp Crame to nearby Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Not a dog pound but animal shelter

Parañaque A23

dogs are kept for only one day" he said.

At the new shelter, the dogs are fed much of rice and leftovers every day, and get bath every two or three days. Once a week, they are ordered from their cages to an area so as to roam around the compound for exercise.

Some of the males are neutered to control the shelter's population.

More expensive

"We would also like to open the females but it's more expensive, unlike castration which is an outpatient procedure. With spaying, the dog will need a place and time to recover," Encarnacion said.

The dogs may be adopted by residents but certain conditions have to be met: Place, time and devotion.

"They need to have a place for the dogs—plus time, devotion. They must really love dogs," he said.

Every month, caretakers spend about P8,000 for food and medicines for a colony of canine inhabitants, and for the upkeep of the facility.

Encarnacion said working in a pound and working in a shelter are two different things.

"We rob humane a lot harder," he said with a laugh. But he said it was also easier on his conscience.

"I shouldn't've make animals live longer. Having to put them to sleep always made me feel guilty," said Encarnacion, a graduate of Dr. Le Salle-Araneta in Malabon City, who used to work with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The office is open to by posting ok. Last year, the city rescinded only one case of rabies.

From July to December 2009, 144 dogs were captured, 43 were redeemed by their owners, and three had been adopted. To maintain a dog, leased over to the shelter can has to pay P100 per day or less.

Encarnacion, 39, said he has five dogs of his own. He has even given attended to the dogs at the shelter and rescues each one by name.

Stories

Showing the business around the cats cages, he recalled some of their stories.

"That one is Puro. He will like that because she was found on the streets injured of a street, and we had to pull out 'puso' (dogs) to the pounds can't believe we could get to him," he said.

Or, a dog "with a gentle disposition," was one of the first to be neutered in the compound, said Encarnacion.

And then there's Amore, so named because during feeding time, he would grab his plate to sniff.

Encarnacion said he was happy when he learned about the new city policy on rabies killings.

"Our mayor (Benhur Abalos) is pro-life," he said. "The policy is absolute: No more killings of stray dogs. Instead, we focus on educating the public about responsible pet ownership. That's the more humane approach."

Parañaque cop faces raps for shooting of 2 brothers

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) filed charges of murder and attempted murder against a Parañaque City policeman, who allegedly shot two brothers he said were involved in a gang war.

Two barangay workers were also charged with murder in the Parañaque City Prosecutor's Office for the killing of Celso de los Santos Jr., of Barangay Tibagan, Cavite, on Laguna province.

NBI Special Task Force (STF) supervising agent Tony Yu said charges against PO2 Richard Gregorio, of the Parañaque City police community Precinct 3; Barangay San Martin de Porres watchman Danilo Fedrosa and Barangay Tibagan chief tanodan Nikki Mora emanated from a complaint lodged by the victim's brother and roommate.

Apart from the victim's death, the Dela Santos previously also charged Gregorio with trying to kill his other son, Allan, in the June 13, 2009 incident.

Based on the investigation conducted by barangay agents, Gregorio's initial claim of the brothers' involvement in a gang war was belied by witnesses who said neither of the siblings was armed when Gregorio allegedly shot the two. Celso died instantly, but his brother Allan was not hit.

Witnesses attending a wake near the crime scene at Barangay Malaguig, BPS 3, also told NBI agents that no gang war occurred contrary to a report reportedly drafted by a police investigator.

The report written by BPOI Rey ando Avejado claimed that Gregorio, accompanied by Fedrosa and Mora, responded to a gang war in Barangay Malaguig. The policemen were reportedly prompted to shoot Celso who allegedly fired a couple of improvised shotgun cartridges.

Pillars announced for questioning, the suspects insisted the Dela Santos brothers took part in a gang war based on the spot report.

MetroBriefs

UP jubilarians' reunion

The 40th batch of the University of the Philippines Diliman class reunion (UPAA) is inviting all alumni jubilarians—Class 1969 (Diamond), Class 1959 (Ruby) and Class 1949 (Silver)—to join in reunion and planning meeting on Feb. 2 at Ang Kubo ng Alaala in UP Diliman from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The general alumni homecoming will be held on June 19-20, also at Ang Kubo ng Alaala. The Feb. 2 meeting will discuss, among other things, the program for the alumni homecoming and other activities to mark the celebration. A photo session has also been scheduled to facilitate the collection of individual photos to be used in the alumni yearbook that will launch during the homecoming. Jubilarians are requested to also be in appropriate alb-ics. Serving or shirt with blazer for men, and saree for women are women. For more information, please contact Shirley at the UPAA Secretariat at telephone numbers 9266571, 9266868, 9266871, 09178372088. Or e-mail upalumni@yahoo.com.ph.

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Alert neighbor foils robbery attempt on plastics warehouse in Valenzuela

By Beverly T. Heraldo

A GUN TO HER A WAREHOUSE containing plastic products in Valenzuela City was foiled yesterday morning, thanks to an alert neighbor who immediately called on the police hotline for help.

The police said they arrested seven men who ransacked the warehouse of Asia Star Plastic Manufacturing in Dalada Road in Punda, Valenzuela, after receiving a call from the Philippine National Police hotline 117.

The suspects—mostly residents of Sitarian City—were identified as Honorio Maliwalan, 29; Elmin Jacobe, 40; Ricardo Pamaglao, 38; Angelito Bacunella Jr., 32; Arnel Montalbo, 32; Samuel Gayabao, 25; and Ferdy Gregorio III, 20.

Chief Insp. Danilo S. Bugay, chief of the Station Investigation and Detection Management Division of Valenzuela, said the seven were seen at the Asia Star warehouse around 10:30 a.m. Saturday posing as buyers and had asked about the company's price list.

Minutes later, they pointed a gun at Mark Anjanet, one of the Asia Star owners, and ordered him to hide in the toilet as they rummaged through the warehouse.

After toiling with their cash amounting to P13,316.50 and two cellular phones, the men boarded a red Mitsubishi Adventure with plate number ADW 239.

A next-door neighbor, however, tipped the police about the robbery after he saw the getaway vehicle. Police eventually caught up with the suspects at the Malinta toll exit.

Authorities recovered the stolen articles as well as three firearms from the suspects.

Apart from robbery charges, the suspects will also face charges for violating the Omnibus Election Code for bringing guns during the election period ban has imposed by the Commission of Elections.

8 MMDA workers face theft raps for stealing scrap steel

By Nina Calleja

EIGHT EMPLOYEES OF THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) are facing criminal and administrative charges for allegedly stealing scrap steel from an old pedestrian overpass they were supposed to demolish.

MMDA Chair Oscar Inocencio ordered the filing of qualified theft charges against Morelle Salina Jr., Michael Zuñiga, Alvin Tejarita, Henry Manrique, Reynaldo Escobes, Ruel Martinez, Manuel de la Cruz, and Ramil Dilagan go yesterday in the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

The suspects, who were listed as laborers and engineers of MMDA's Construction Equipment Management Office (Cemo), presented, are now detained at the MMDA Bureau of Intelligence and Investigation Division (BIDI) in Makati City.

Caught

Supt. Elie Pinuang, BIDI head, said the employees were caught selling pieces of scrap steel they sawed from an old overpass near the Tandang Sora Commonwealth Avenue intersection in Quezon City.

MMDA-Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group (SCOG) operatives spotted the eight and their service vehicle in front of a junk shop at around 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, according to Pinuang.

"The SCOG personnel became suspicious as they pulled over and decided to check. But the Cemo workers immediately fled," Pinuang said.

SCOG operatives caught the eight suspects after a brief chase.

Three other Cemo personnel identified as Ricky Atienza, Bryan Dedoslig, and Ronelio Rondez were able to escape, Pinuang said.

According to junk shop attendant Myrna Lunedo, the MMDA men had been selling scrap materials to the shop.

Interviews said the suspects should have brought the scrap to the agency's depository area in Pasig City for proper accounting and disposal instead of selling the materials.

QC businessmen warned about absence of CCTVs

By Mercy C. Cornejo

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS IN QUEZON City with no surveillance equipment will be closed following a stricter implementation of a city ordinance, the city's top police official said.

"I urge businessmen in the city to install CCTV (closed circuit television) equipment as part of their security measures, otherwise we will be forced to recommend their temporary closure until they comply with the ordinance," Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego, Quezon City Police District director said.

San Diego said the ordinance required all store owners to put their own surveillance equipment as a big deterrent to crime prevention.

"The installation of CCTV systems not only in banks but also in other establishments in the city which could be potential targets of armed robbers could be a deterrent," he explained.

The police official said Ordinance No. 1220 requiring all banks and bank branches in Quezon City to install CCTVs had been amended and is now more comprehensive. It covers gasoline stations, malls, pawnshops, supermarkets, money changing shops and 24-hour convenience stores.

He added that all video tapes should be properly stored to maintain the condition and clarity of the footage.

"They should be stored unedited and in good condition for at least one month for future reference," San Diego said.

A violation of the ordinance would be penalized by suspension, revocation or cancellation of the business establishment's permit to operate.

San Diego said the QCPD would strictly enforce the ordinance and will regularly conduct an inspection of the establishments.

Mandaluyong marks 2 major events on Feb. 9

ALL IS SET FOR THE CELEBRATION OF Mandaluyong City's 65th Liberation Day and its 16th City hood Anniversary on Feb. 9.

Twelve days of activities have been lined up to highlight the event, beginning with the inauguration/blessing of a multipurpose building in Barangay Addition Hills and the launching of "Ciao Barangay" featuring the film "Lola" by award-winning director and Mandaluyong resident, Brillante Mendoza on Feb. 3.

Local and overseas employment also await jobseekers with the "Mega Jobs Fair" to be held on Feb. 2 at the Mandaluyong City gymnasium, along with the mobile service of processing passports solely for Mandaluyong residents.

City employees will showcase their talents on Day 3 to be followed by the "Mandaluyong" Kalusugan Kontra Droga 2nd Annual Rap Contest.

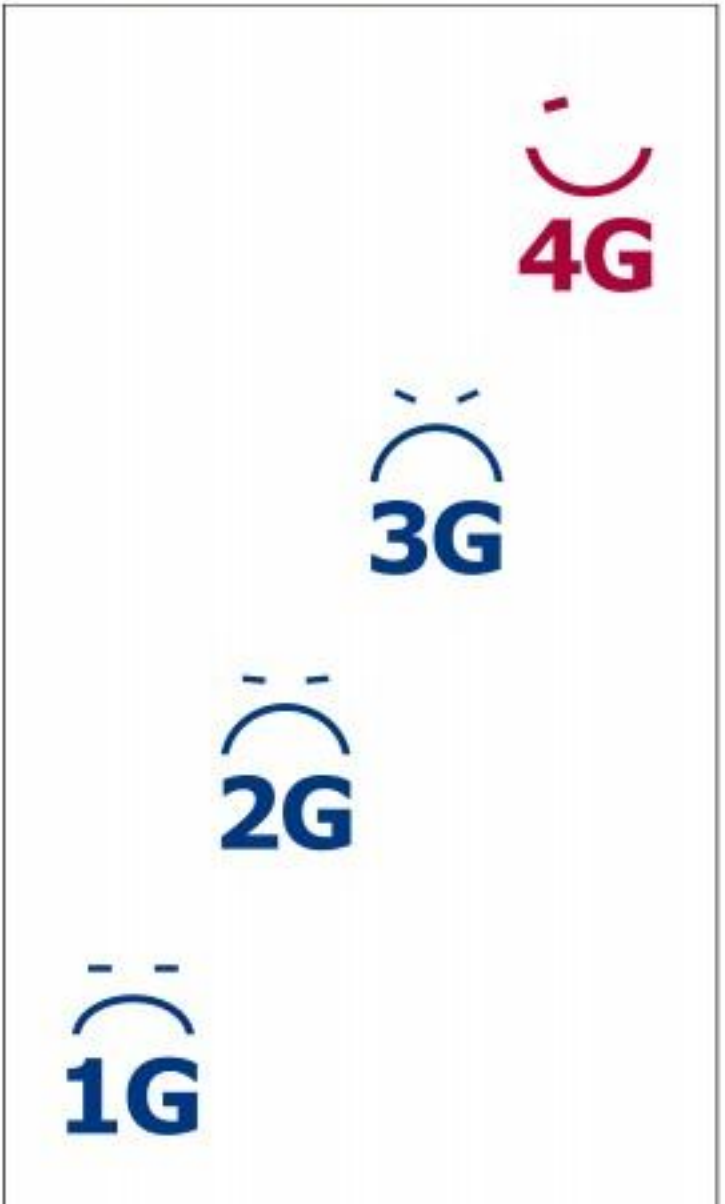
Other activities include the blessing of various infrastructure projects such as covered courts in Barangays Wack-wack, the inauguration of Southern Multipurpose Hall in Barangay Hulo and drainage and alley projects in Block 37 and 38 and the renovation of the Health Center and Day Care Center in Barangay Addition Hills.

A total of 25 candidates will also vie for the "Miss Mandaluyong" title on Feb. 6.

The city government will also host a recognition night for "Top 10 Taxpayers" and "Strong Mandaluyo" awardees on Feb. 7 at Black Bitch Golf and Country Club.

On Feb. 8, Mayor Benhur Abalos will deliver his State of the City Address to update residents on developments and achievements of the city.

Abalos will lead city employees and residents in the traditional Liberation Day Parade on Feb. 9. The date marks the event when liberation forces ended the town's occupation by the Japanese forces.



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GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor: Sherry Ann Lim

"WE SHOULD NOT HOLD OUR remittances alone. We should attract greater foreign capital to create jobs locally."
RALPH RECTO, January 29-9

This section is dedicated to Filipinos everywhere toiling as hard and at times [illegible] circumstances alien and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

HAMMY'S ART Manny Samson's photographs, clockwise from left: A holy man in Jerusalem, a Bedouin man in Petra, Jordan, a woman angel in Duomo Church, and Daniel the angel, both from his collection of 77 angels, in Milan.

Around the world through his lens clearly

By Peachy Vibal, Galogate

FOR EMMANUEL "Manny" Samson whose photographic art can be seen in many European and North American galleries, the journey from obscurity to international fame was made possible by his "love at first sight" with a camera.

He remembers where it all started—in a small bar in Baguio.

While hanging about and plucking the guitar in some obscure bar in the city, Manny happened to spot his eyes on a fellow he vividly recalled as "one of the most incredible cameras owned by a bar hanging, the famous Japanese war correspondent, Mamo Endo." He was spellbound, to say the least, and for this Bahaluktok, it became a sort of will and he begged Endo to let him look into the multimeters of photography.

Biggest break

The passion to learn blossomed demanding of visual arts found encouragement and support from a fellow artist who became a lifetime friend, Wig Symmers. He went on to become one of the country's most sought after photographers.

"Wig was one of the biggest influences in my life as he patiently taught me how to use a prism in a darkroom," he said.

The biggest break for Manny came when Endo, who needed an assistant as he photographed the people of the Mountain Province, asked Manny to be his local tour guide. It was from their trek to the Cordilleras that Manny became subject to photography as Endo, grateful for his services, gave Manny his first camera.

It was Endo who asked him to make the fateful decision that would alter his life. Make your choice: Be an engineer, a folk singer or a photographer. Manny opted for the snap of the shutter and has never regretted it.

First job

"I've always wanted to travel and capture the universality of humanity," Manny spoke with an Australian accent, having lived Down Under for more than two decades. He felt that a camera would be his passport to be able to do this. And he was right. Because his camera has afforded him to go around the world and back.

"My first job was in document the plight of the Vietnamese refugees living in the overcrowded camps in Bataan," he said. He reminisced being in the courthouse for two years as he lived and breathed with his subjects and heard their sorry tale.

The passion for photography that started in the dark corners of that dingy bar in Baguio became his life and career with this first professional assignment as a photographer.

"It consumed my dreams," And this dream has taken him to the remotest jungles of the Amazon, down to the deepest desert of Arabia and to the wild animal sanctuaries of Africa.

Photographing 'legends'

Married to Suzanne, an Ilonggo, children when he met to Baguio, Manny decided to settle in his wife's hometown in Mindanao. "I was one and was down to my last when I got to Mindanao," he said. The first thing he did to earn a living was to sing his way into the hearts of the Aurorez.

But as fate would have it, Manny was introduced to a Filipino resort executive who, when he learned that he was a photographer, asked him to shoot the covers of some of their artists' records or books. Little did he know that he wouldn't just be shooting bands or singers, but some of the legends in the music industry such as Carlos Santana, the Rolling Stones, David Bowie and Mick Jagger, to name a few.

Asked if he had his photo taken with them, Manny answered in the negative saying that he would rather "keep the pictures of these legends in my mind."

In Melbourne, Manny and his wife live near a Vedova cathedral school. With his background in documenting the Cordillera tribes and the Vietnamese boat people, the Jewish community played his curiosity. This led him to approach the head of the community, rabbi Danny, and to show him the photos he had taken in the past.

It was a good move since being in contact the rabbi chose his own snapping shots of numerous city members in action. These photos were published in the local magazines that eventually gave him the chance to be noticed by Time magazine which liked what Manny produced and asked him to join its pool of photographers.

Manny's photos so highly impressed the Jewish school that when it needed somebody to do a documentary it was Manny whom they tapped. "I guess it was time

WHEN LEVISMEN POSE BEFORE THE CAMERA, they're no different from their subjects, from left: Samson, Wig Symmers, and filmmaker Boy Miguel at a house in Bear Ridge in Quezon City.

HAMMY'S ANGELS Models pose for Manny's collection of angels.

way of allowing the world to take a glimpse of who they are. And it was actually an honor for me to be asked to document them," he said.

Asked if his home is enough, the Jewish assignment gave Manny his first opportunity to exhibit his photos at the premier art gallery and museum in Australia, the National Gallery of Australia. "They have included my work to their permanent collection," he said. Since then, there has been no turning back for Manny as he brings his works and photo collections to various European and North American galleries.

He, with all that the world has to offer, Manny never forgets where his roots are and always makes it a point to come home to the Philippines and share with his countrymen the photos that he had taken in his travels.

It had been a long and personal journey for him. It all started almost by chance, when he first saw up close his future mentor's camera. It is a piece of sophisticated machinery and it takes a real passion to turn it into a creative tool. Manny not only has gone beyond the gadgetry he has become its artistic master.

And his photos, like shots of life, have captured the universal humanity in all of us all over the world.

Jason Ivler is no Daniel Smith

THERE ARE SEVERAL JESSICA cases that may counter that road rage suspect Jason Aguilar Ivler will attempt to obtain preferential treatment during his trial. But as observed, the custodian's assurance is more or less to say that the Filipino nationals' rights and interests are protected. There are no special treatments accorded to foreigners facing charges, it is anticipated with exercitudes that Ivler will not receive any preferential treatment and he treated as an ordinary suspect-criminal alien.

Issues raised

The media had an extensive coverage of Ivler during his arrest in his home in Bear Ridge, Quezon City. The events in the Nov. 28, 2009 road rage shooting for which Ivler is being charged is not an ordinary series.

Senator Vicente Ebarle Jr. is the son of the undersecretary of the presidential chief of staff. His late father Jaime, Ivler claims, as reported, is also not an ordinary American citizen.

If Ivler were a Filipino investigated in the US facing charges, the Philippine consulate may provide assistance during his trial. But as observed, the consulate's assistance is more on ensuring that the Filipino nationals' rights and interests are protected. There are no special treatments accorded to foreigners facing charges, it is anticipated with exercitudes that Ivler will not receive any preferential treatment and he treated as an ordinary suspect-criminal alien.

IMFO
Lourdes Sandra Tandoc

He is the nephew of a world-renowned singer Freddie Aguilar. More interestingly Ivler was also a former member of the US Marine Corps once deployed in Iraq.

'Rosie'

But, soldier Lance Corporal Daniel Smith who was tried, convicted and later acquitted of rape charges, Ivler is no longer in active military service. Neither is he assigned to the Philippines under the Visiting Forces Agreement. Unfortunately for Ivler, he does not have the protections of the provisions of the VFA. He is not expected to be under the custody of the US embassy pending the legal proceedings against him.

The fact that he is related to a celebrity is not a favorable factor to his case. In fact, he is best described in the song popularized by his uncle, "Rosie," where his mother/sister had roamed his mother to hear the melancholic and heartbroken of his sister before selling of viewers.

No treaty with US

Had he surrendered voluntarily and not escaped from authorities, he would have presented remorseful remorse, showing an genuine remorse or even an innocent DNF also named Jason Aguilar in Qatar and prevented injuries to spotted against to the National Bureau of Investigation.

Ivler once attempted to escape. There are speculations that he may also try to evade his prosecution or detention. The circumstances of his case may not be favorable but just like any suspect in any criminal case, Ivler is entitled to his rights. He will be afforded the right to due process.

Compared to Spain, the US does not have a treaty with the Philippines that allows transfer of detainees to their home state. Ivler's case is not similar to the case of Larrañaga, a Spanish convicted of rape. Larrañaga was allowed to depart the Philippines to continue his detention in a Spanish prison.

A number of Filipino immigrants are also incarcerated in US prisons and serving sentences for crimes that they have committed. I have yet to see the wailing by the Philippine government of a convicted Filipino immigrant petitioning to jail the inhabitants of criminal or immigration law.

The new policy against criminal aliens is apparent in the US. The immigration law contains harsh provisions against criminal aliens, especially those convicted of violent offenses. Despite serving sentences based on the criminal conviction and ex-convict has far back the offenses was committed, the immigration and Customs Enforcement is considered as incarcerate and deport the alien after completion of his criminal sentence.

This is also the same policy that is being espoused by the Philippine government where officials publicly mentioned that Ivler is going to be tried first in Philippine courts before he is sent back to the US to face his criminal charges before the criminal courts in Reno, Nevada.

Immaterial to his defense

All citizens and aliens alike are all expected to respect the law. The government is mandated to defend Philippine law and sovereignty against aliens who are convicted of committing crimes against Filipino nationals.

The celebrity status, the fact that Ivler is an American and a former member of the US Marine Corps are of no consequence and immaterial in his defense.

Justice must be served and the rule of the law must be upheld. But in these times of uncertainty, it remains to be seen how the wheels of justice will turn for the families of the murdered victim.

Sandra may be reached at lmo@inquirer.com.ph or at 687 7177 or 725 5963.

Haitians tire of waiting, start own rebuilding

PORT-AU-PRINCE ... HAPPY TO please to wait for Haiti's reconstruction, families lugged heavy bundles of wood and tin up steep hillsides on Friday to do the unthinkable: Build new homes on top of old ones destroyed in the earthquake.

The defiance reflects growing anger and frustration among Haitians who complain that their leaders—and any rebuilding plans—are almost mute three weeks after the Jan. 12 earthquake damaged or destroyed thousands of homes in the capital.

Few tents have been supplied, aftershocks continue shown in many towns, and signs begging for help in English—not Haitian Creole—dot nearly every street corner in Port-au-Prince.

It could take another month to get the 200,000 tents needed for Haiti's homeless, said Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue, the cabinet and communications minister. Haiti now has fewer than 5,000 donated tents.

At the concrete slum of Canape Vert, an area devastated by the quake, dozens of people were pooling their labor and getting on with rebuilding.

"I have 44 years' worth of memories in this house," said Wod Hilaire Jean, 44, whose family was rebuilding crumbling walls with tin and wood.

"I got married here. I met my husband here. My mother handed me her bed there where those walls used to stand," Jean said. "Even if it's unsafe, I can't imagine leaving. Even if the government builds me a house, it will come too late. That is how it is in Haiti."

Surrounding her, concrete homes were either crushed or had toppled down a hill. Jean and others in families said they were worried both about the coming rains season and fears they may lose their jobs after deadlines to rebuild—or they either lack clear title or the government does not want them to rebuild on land it considers unsafe.

Reconstruction, coordinated and land titles are all priorities of the government of President Rene Preval, and so far in name only. The government has been mostly paralyzed by the quake—its own infrastructure, including the National Palace, was destroyed—and so far it has been limited to appeals for foreign aid and meetings with foreign governments that have yet to produce detailed plans for the emergencies it confronts.

Steps now to moving people from areas prone to more earthquakes and landslides into land—cities that have sometimes used security has been very slow to build. Preval has engaged in dozens of meetings with potential outside contractors to discuss debris removal, sanitation and other long-term needs. Alison Rosenthal, assistant secretary of the Organization of American States, has offered help in creating a new land-titling system, a process that could take months if not years because countless government records were destroyed in the quake.

Haitians ordinarily defend their property rights. If a family has occupied land for more than 10 years, they typically have gained ownership rights even without a deed. For some families, small homes have been passed on through the generations. For Haitians have fascinated, and the loss of what few assets they have has crippled countless families.

AP

JEAN Claude Seud (right) is helped by relatives to carry zinc sheets to rebuild his home that collapsed in the Jan. 12 earthquake in the Canape Vert neighborhood of Port-au-Prince on Friday. AP

IN THIS June 22, 1980 picture, US President Jimmy Carter and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stand together at the port of San Giorgio Island, Venice, during the G7 economic summit. AP

Bin Laden slams US on climate

DUBAI—AL-QAEDA CHIEF Osama bin Laden lectured the United States and other leaders that nations on climate change and urged a dollar boycott over US "tyranny," in a rare verbal assault Saturday on Friday.

In the message aired on Al Jazeera television, possibly timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum in Davos, Bin Laden said "oil industrial nations, mainly the big ones, are responsible for the waves of global warming."

"Discussing climate change is not in its infancy [since it] is not a reality," he said in the audio recording, whose authenticity could not be immediately verified.

He said: "This is a message to the whole world about these who are causing climate change, whether deliberately or not, and what we should do about that."

The al-Qaida chief condemned the administration of former US president George W Bush for refusing to sign the Kyoto protocol on curbing carbon emissions.

"Bush and the Congress before him, rejected this agreement, only to satisfy the big companies," he said.

"Those thieves are behind speculation and monopolies, and even in prices... such they are behind global science and

OSAMA bin Laden

trade by refusing to sign the Kyoto protocol on curbing carbon emissions."

Bush, and the Congress before him, rejected this agreement, only to satisfy the big companies," he said.

"Those thieves are behind speculation and monopolies, and even in prices... such they are behind global science and trade by refusing to sign the Kyoto protocol on curbing carbon emissions."

Bin Laden also slammed financial bailouts set up by wealthy countries to help big industry cope with the global financial crisis, saying the governments helped companies that created the economic meltdown.

"When those perpetrators fall victims to the evil they had committed, the heads of states rush to rescue them using public money," he said.

He also bemoaned many presidential American leftist Noam Chomsky saying the US administration operates like the media.

"Chomsky was right when he pointed to a resemblance between American political and the approach of media gangs. Those are the real terrorists," said Bin Laden.

He was apparently referring to comments made in British newspaper The Guardian in November by Chomsky, a linguistics professor famous for his struggle against US foreign policies.

The al-Qaida leader went on to urge a boycott of the US dollar.

"My advice may using the dollar and get rid of it... I know that there would be huge repercussions for that, but this would be the only way to free humankind from slavery, to America and its companies," he said.

"Whatever the repercussions of such [boycott] decision would be, moving to slavery to them would have bigger and more dangerous results."

In a translation provided by the US-based SITE Intelligence Group, bin Laden compared the US economy to a bicycle wheel.

"If it loses a link in its chain, it stops running... If the progress of the world stop consuming American products, this link will become more vulnerable, and this leads to the reduction of its harmful gases," he said.

AFP

Files show 'Iron Lady' was at odds with US on Iran

LONDON—MARGARET THATcher, for all her reputation as a hard-liner, rebuffed appeals from US President Jimmy Carter to a more demonstrative response to the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, saying it would do more harm than good, according to papers in her personal files released on Saturday.

The files cover the first eight months of Thatcher's 11 and a half years as prime minister, giving glimpses of her embarking on an ambitious domestic agenda to reverse the economic and trade union, and engaging with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran on Nov. 4.

They were made public by the Thatcher Foundation under rules that allow the keeping documents secret for 30 years.

On Nov. 14, Carter asked in a cable for "the strongest possible communications or action" to pressure Iran, suggesting that Britain consider evicting the number of diplomatic staff in the country.

Thatcher responded a week later that Britain had withdrawn some staff, "but we have not believed it wise to make a political point of any reduction, justify because we doubt whether the Iranians would be much impressed and partly because of the risk of retaliatory action against those remaining."

In May, before the embassy siege, and less than two weeks after Thatcher was elected, Carter appealed for "urgent private representations" to Iranian authorities to assure the safety of Iranian Jews. Thatcher refused, saying the British Embassy did not believe Jews faced organized persecution, and that other entities "would... indeed make their position less secure."

Thatcher had met Carter twice in 1977, before she was elected, and the US president came away disabused, though according to previously released papers, he was impressed by the lawyer.

Thatcher becoming prime minister, agreeing with National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's view that she was "a cooler, wiser, more pragmatic person now than the opposition leader you met in May 1977 or the dogmatic lady who visited you in Washington that fall."

AP

US rules out astronauts' return to moon

WASHINGTON—A PLAN TO RETURN US astronauts to the moon "is dead," a White House official on open terms said on Friday, confirming reports that Nasa will instead focus on developing commercial space transport.

"Constellation is dead," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity, confirming news reports that astronaut returning to the moon by 2020 and using Earth's nearest neighbor as a base for manned expeditions to Mars.

Florida Today newspaper first reported the demise of the program on Thursday, stating the plan would be detailed in the financial year 2011 budget which President Barack Obama is to present to Congress on Monday.

Reports added that the US space agency will look for funding a commercial solution to carrying US astronauts to the International Space Station, with the dedicated end of Nasa's shuttle program in September 2010.

Only five more shuttle flights, including a mission by the Endeavour set for a Feb. 7 launch, are planned.

Administrator will be able to fetch riches abroad Russian's next spacecraft, but the United States will need a commercial alternative if Congress approves White House plans to scrap development of a successor to the shuttle program.

The administration reportedly plans to hike Nasa's budget by $5.5 billion over the years to boost commercial development, with the goal of a first commercial flight to the ISS blastoffing by 2015, the source said.

The Constellation program was launched in 2004 by then President George W Bush.

Space expert John Logsdon said the abandonment of the program—did not spell the end for US ambitions in space.

"While Constellation is dead, it does not mean human space exploration is also dead," said Logsdon, former director of the Space Policy Institute at George Washington University.

He said Nasa would probably have to plan within the private sector and international partners for the future of the ISS past 2020.

Getting the cancellation through Congress would be "tough," he added, as lawmakers from Florida and other states with close ties to the space program could oppose anything that threatened local jobs.

ON THIS July 20, 1969 file photo, astronaut Edwin E. Aldrin Jr., lunar module pilot, descends steps of Lunar Module ladder as he prepares to walk on the moon.

Most of Constellation's cancellation came as Nasa marked today of remembrance, honoring astronauts who died in the Apollo 1, Challenger and Columbia space missions.

President Obama released a statement paying tribute to those "who lost their lives supporting Nasa's mission of exploration and study of the Earth, the planets and the stars."

AFP

Malaysia urged to drop sex charge against Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR—MINOR rights group Amnesty International has urged Malaysia to drop a "politically motivated" sodomy charge against opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, ahead of the trial due to start next week.

Amnesty lost his final appeal on Friday for access to the government's evidence in a case which could see him jailed for up to 20 years if convicted of sodomising a male former aide.

Anwar was sacked as deputy prime minister and jailed a decade ago on separate sodomy and corruption charges.

"The Malaysian authorities have resorted to the same old dirty tricks in an attempt to remove the opposition leader from politics," Sam Zarifi, Amnesty Asia-Pacific director said in a statement issued in London Friday.

"Malaysia's judiciary should throw out these charges."

Amnesty said it is "seriously concerned" over a claim by Anwar, especially after Friday's ruling, which the "rendering decision could be an embarrassment" to international fair trial standards.

"Anwar's case has rightly raised doubts among the international community and observers about Malaysia's commitment to justice and the rule of law," Zarifi added.

Anwar spent the years in prison after he was convicted in 1998 but the sex charge was eventually overturned. Amnesty had considered him a prisoner of conscience before his release.

After being freed Anwar reinvigorated the opposition and rallied it in 2008 to advance in four seat results to national elections, when it won a third of parliamentary seats.

Anwar has accused the Malaysian government of seeking to convict him quickly as part of efforts to deflect attention against its own woes.

AFP

ANWAR Ibrahim

Priest checks fingerprints for Mass attendance

FARIAN—A POLISH PRIEST has installed an electronic reader in his church for schoolchildren to have their fingerprints in order to monitor their attendance at Mass, the Gazeta Wyborcza daily reports Friday.

The pupils will touch their fingerprints every time they go to church over the year and if they attend 200 masses they will be freed from the obligation of having to pass an exam prior to their graduation, the paper said.

The pupils in the southern town of Gryfow Slaski told the daily they liked the idea and also that priest, Grzegorz Sowa, who invented it.

"This is comfortable. We don't have to stand in a line to get the priest's signature [confirming our presence at the Mass] in our confession notebooks," said one pupil.

Reuters

The WORLD

Criss Lorenzo B. Gocco

China protests $6.4-B US arms sale to Taiwan

BEIJING/WASHINGTON—CHINA WARNED ON Saturday that Washington's announcement of arms sales to Taiwan would badly hurt ties between the two global powers, widening rifts in their far-reaching relationship.

The swift and sharp protest came from Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Yabo, who said his government was "strongly indignant" about the proposed US sale of weapons to Taiwan, which China considers an illegitimate breakaway province.

The Obama administration told the US Congress on Friday of the proposed sales to Taiwan, a potential $6.4-billion package including Black Hawk helicopters, Patriot Advanced Capability-3 antimissile missiles, and two refurbished Osprey-class mine-hunting ships.

Beijing responded with Wu's summoning delivered to the US ambassador in China, Jon Huntsman, that the arms deal could jeopardize bonds with Washington, which has looked to China for help in overcome ing the financial crisis, dealing with Iran and North Korea, and fighting climate change.

Wu's Minister Wu did not spell out what reprisals Beijing may move out against Washington over the weapons sales. But he hinted the anger would be felt in a number of areas.

"The United States' announcement of the planned weapons sales to Taiwan will have a seriously negative impact on many important areas of exchanges and cooperation between the two countries," said Wu in the remarks, published on the Chinese Foreign Ministry's website (www.mfa.gov.cn).

He said the arms sales were "crude interference to China's domestic affairs and seriously harm China's national security," words notably tougher than Beijing's recent statements on the issue.

"This will lead to expressions that ratchet side relations to see," said Wu. He urged the US to halt the planned sales.

The US arms sales to Taiwan have joined trade imbalances, currency disputes, human rights, the internet, and Tibet among rifts dividing the world's biggest and third biggest economies.

Washington and Beijing have also recently traded angry words about Internet policy after the search engine giant Google Inc earlier this month threatened to shut its Chinese google.cn portal and pull out of China, citing censorship problems and hacking attacks.

In coming months Obama may meet the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan leader China calls a dangerous separatist, adding more fuel to the simmering dispute.

Reuters

ARMY soldiers demonstrate aerial weaponry in Taiwan's Defense Minister Kao Hua-chu during a military exercise in Penghuin this handout picture taken on Jan. 29.

Pork better for sex than Viagra?

BUENOS AIRES—ARGENTINES' president thinks eating pig meat is really sexy.

Many people in this beef-loving nation reacted with surprise on Thursday after Cristina Fernandez promoted pork in a speech during which she not only said pork is better than Viagra, but suggested she's personally proven it.

"I didn't know that eating pork improved sexual activity," Fernandez said in a meeting with representatives of the swine industry late Wednesday. "It is much more gratifying to eat some grilled pork than to take Viagra."

She even joked that "it was all good" after she enjoyed some pork with her husband, former President Nestor Kirchner.

"I think they might be right," Fernandez said to a laughing audience.

The president's ball-joking speech in which she announced subsidies for the pork industry was prominent play on television and radio stations, prompting discussions on whether Argentines should add more pork to their diet.

Argentines are among the world's biggest consumers of red meat, and most people here enthusiastically reject the idea of replacing beef with chicken, pork or other meats. Despite Argentina lying along rich South Atlantic fisheries, seafood is rarely seen on dinner tables.

But subsidies approved subsidies to keep the price of pork low despite inflation, and her government has also recently subsidized red meat purchases after beef supplies sharply declined in the South American country.

The head of the association of pork producers, Juan Luis Uccelli, supported Fernandez's speech by saying that Denmark and Japan have a much more "harmonious" sexual life than the Argentines because they eat a lot of pig meat.

"In Osaka, Japan, there is a village in which the people who reached 120 years old and are a lot of pork had a lot of sexual activity," he told radio station.

Others were skeptical.

"There is no study showing that pork meat significantly improves sexual activity," Antonio Bechara, a specialist in sexual dysfunction, told the website of the newspaper La Nacion.

AP

Defiant Blair says no regrets over Iraq war

LONDON—FORMER BRITish Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Friday he had no regrets about the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, saying Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world's safety that had to be dismissed or removed.

Blair said the Sept. 11 al-Qaida attacks on the United States meant regue states had to be dealt with to prevent weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands, making invasion a greater urgency.

Facing the first official public grilling on why he sent 45,000 British troops to war in Iraq, he repeatedly said he was convinced that such a risk remained today, referring to fears over Iran's disputed nuclear program.

"Responsibility but not a regret for removing Saddam Hussein," he said, when asked if he had misgivings about taking military action. He said a majority of Iraqis would say they were better off now than under the former dictator.

The decision to go to war was the most controversial episode of Blair's 10-year premiership, provoking huge protests, divisions within the Labour Party and accusations he had deceived the public about the reasons he invaded.

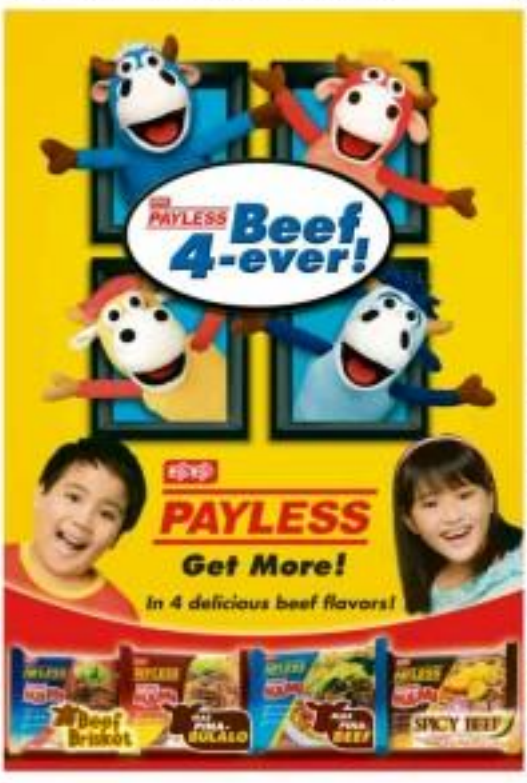
"In the end it was divisive. And I'm sorry about that," he said. "But if I'm asked if I believe we are safer, more secure, than Iraq is better, than our own security is better with Saddam and his two sons out of power and out of office, then I believe indeed we are."

During six hours of intense questioning, Blair, 56, was unrepentant over the stand he took with then US President George W. Bush, batting away queries about the legality of war or whether he had misled the public over the reasons for it.

"This isn't about a lie, or a conspiracy, or a deception, this is a decision," said Blair, who initially looked nervous but grew more assured as the hearing went on.

Reuters

BLAIR



Waging War Against Diabetes

MANETTE: Philippine chairman and president, Dr. Teresita S. Ty-Wilkig, received this significant award for raising awareness of diabetes, considered to be the most leading cause of death in the Philippines.

LIM, the environmentally division of United Laboratories, Inc. (UNILAB), recently supported the observance of World Diabetes Day led by Diabetes Philippines. With "Understand Diabetes and Take Control" as this year's theme, a nationwide walkout of the day's activity with three groups running from key cities of metro Manila: in Mandaluyong City, Quezon City Circle and Bonifacio High Street. All groups converged at the Quezon Park Extension center for more physical activities and six hours. Physicians, industry players, medical workers, members and patients came in full force to support the event. The half-day commemoration intended to raise awareness and broader understanding of diabetes in order to encourage more Filipinos in be conscious of their health and their potential to acquire such chronic disease.

It has been estimated that the prevalence of diabetes in Asia will increase 2 to 3 fold in the next 20 years. By then, the Philippines will rise to one of the top ten countries that have the highest prevalence of diabetes in the world.

"Lilha is a full supporter of Diabetes Philippines' "can" against diabetes. We believe that if Filipinos are well educated about the disease, there is greater chance for us to curb the threat. Most people are not too conscious of their health despite the fact that other family members who have diabetes are enough indicative that the rest of the family are at risk of acquiring the same condition," says Dr. Rosario Castro, medical director of LIM.

"We have to keep on reminding the public about the threat of diabetes and encourage people to have their regular check-ups to avoid its increasing incidence and its dread vertical complications," he adds.

LIM has been in the industry for 18 years. As one of the business divisions of the country's largest healthcare company, Unilab, LIM offers the most comprehensive and most value-promising healthcare solutions. In 2010, LIM will intensify its campaign to propagate awareness and effective steps to manage diabetes, touted to be a silent epidemic.

3 Americans killed in Afghanistan

KABUL—A CIVILIAN was among three Americans killed in Afghanistan in an incident still under investigation, National said Saturday.

A brief statement from Kabul's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf), released late Friday, said the deaths occurred in eastern Afghanistan earlier in the day.

"Two US service members and one US employee were killed today in eastern Afghanistan," it said.

An Isaf spokesperson confirmed to AFP the "employee" was an American civilian but said no further information was available on what happened or where.

The deaths of the US soldiers brings to 44 the total number of foreign troops to die in Afghanistan this year, according to the icasualties.org website, which places 29 were Americans.

Of occupations, the website says a total of 22 foreign troops were killed in January last year.

AFP

AFTER his heroics Friday night, Jayson Yap of Purefoods (middle) will be the central target of Rain or Shine's defense tonight.

Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy B. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

TJ Giants, Texters gun for 2-0 leads

By Jasmine W. Payo

AFTER SURVIVING A LATE CHALLENGE BY THEIR OPPONENTS, Purefoods and Talk 'N Text shoot for a commanding 2-0 lead in the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinals today.

The Giants battle the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters at 6:30 p.m. with Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio expecting another fiery exhibition at the Araneta Coliseum.

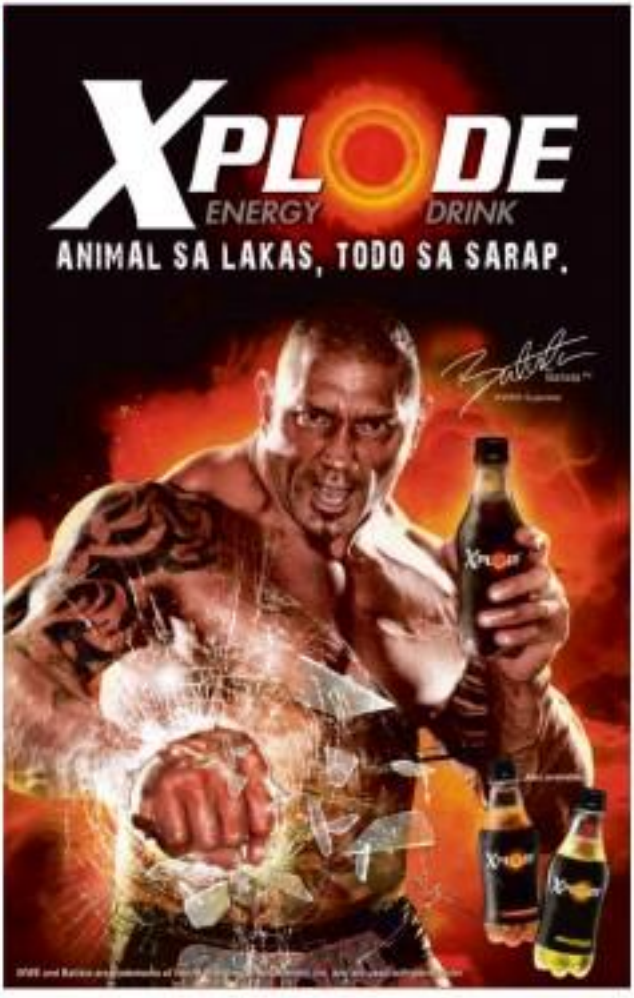
"It's going to be tough," said Gregorio. "I really expect them to play hard. Imagine a like Vured playing in the quarterfinals, so you can really appreciate their kind of fighting hearts. We're aware of that. I think what's important every time you go up against a team like Rain or Shine is to respect them."

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Barangay Ginebra
6:30 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Purefoods

Talk 'N Text coach Glen Reyes similarly expects a tougher outing in his Tropang Texters' 4 p.m. clash against crowd favorite Barangay Ginebra Kings in the other best-of-five series.

"It's nice to get the first one down but we need to get two more," said Reyes, noting that his wards surrendered to Smoking Gunners's relegation in Talk 'N Text's 107-92 Game 1 victory last Friday.

"Game 1 is over now. I'm sure they're going to make their ad-



Panabo overall champ; KO star cleans up foes

By Recah Trinidad

PUERTO PRINCESA — VICTORIO DALUZAR, SON OF A CORN FARMER, CONCLUDED a KO clean-up of all three foes, throne-del Sur (Panabo) emerged the top team while an investigation was set on controversial decisions at the close of the Smart-Shop National Boxing Championships here on Friday.

Saludar, 18, smashed Iloilanon right Rivera Junio Gob to the floor with clubbing body blows to win by retirement in 1 minute 41 seconds of the first to take the gold medal with his third successive knockout win.

Saludar then led easily prospects for the national team in the Youth Olympics, while his Davao del Norte team topped the event with a total of six gold medals, one silver and five bronzes.

Powerhouse Baguio City slumped with eight on the last day to finish a strong second with five golds, one silver and three bronzes, followed by Puerto Princesa Team is with three golds, five silvers and five bronzes.

Second Maasin Ormoni, powered by the Jalmalo brothers, collected three gold medals, one silver and one bronze to finish fourth overall.

"I will conduct an inquiry on controversial decisions," vowed Abap executive director Ed Picson. "Officials must not only be honest but competent as well."

After three trouble-free days, officiating moved to sure sparry in the semifinals with the final day was marked with protests against questionable judging and officiating.

Antonio Tardo of Baguio City tempfi. calmly earned by the referee after getting a jab on the forehead in the first round of her girl's bantamweight final against Catherine Jimenez, stopped out of the ring crying and protesting.

Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn of host Puerto Princesa graced the closing rites, thanked the organizers and congratulated the participants of the event that ironically pulled no outstanding referee while leaving out the most outstanding bouts.

NEW CHAMP Beibut Shumenov (left) of Kazakhstan takes a punch from Mihail Zaferopulos during their world championship fight at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas. Shumenov took Zaferopulos's title by split decision. AP/FILE

So blunders, yields to leader Giri

Standings after 10 rounds:

GM Wang Yue (China) — 7.5 points; **GM Vladimir Kramnik** (Russia) — 7; **GM Peter Svidler** (Russia) — 6.5; **GM Alexander Grischuk** (Russia) — 6; **GM Anish Giri** (Netherlands) — 5.5; **GM Ruslan Ponomariov** (Ukraine) — 5; **GM Vassily Ivanchuk** (Ukraine) — 4.5; **GM Sergey Karjakin** (Ukraine) — 4; **GM Alexander Motylev** (Russia) — 3.5; **GM Pavel Eljanov** (Ukraine) — 3; **GM Wang Hao** (China) — 2.5; **GM Dmitry Andreikin** (Russia) — 2.

WIJK AAN ZEE, NETHERLANDS — This game would haunt Motylev before a long time.

Just a move away from certain victory, the Filipino Grandmaster blundered and lost as he faced irresistible master against wide Invader GM Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the 11th round of the Corus chess tournament at the Steelcase Complex Castle here Friday.

Giri ahead in time and enjoying his total edge, the 16-year-old he only seemed to take Giri's knight on d3 as took on f4-on his 30th move to consolidate his position.

Inexplicably, however, he pushed his knight to e5, allowing the fearless and hot-fighting Dutch champion to check him with a rook.

So resigned because while he can capture the rook with his king, he'll be checkmated by Giri's queen on the next move.

The win enabled the 15-year-old Giri, of Nepalese and Russian descent, to raise his total to 6.5 points, one up over GM Ni Hua of China and GM Erwin Dust of the Netherlands with only two rounds to go in the category 18 Group II.

He halved the point with GM Pentala Harikrishna of India and we did Viben with International Master Anna Muzychuk of Slovenia, the lone female entry.

So remained with 6.5 points in a tie for the top spot with Ukraine's Ruslan Ponomariov and needs to win his last two games against GM David Howell of England and Motylev, respectively to retain any title hope.

To boost his title bid, Giri also would have to drop his last two games and hit and Dust spit for those to their last two assignments.

Experts who followed the game explained opined that Motylev have tried again to blitz an opponent under time pressure.

"Motley had about 20 minutes to Giri's one. But he has a bad habit of trying to blitz an opponent under time pressure. He got away with it once in this tournament. But not a second time. This is a tough lesson for him to learn, but should help him in the long run," said an analyst.

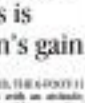
Heading white, he opened with 1.e4, breaking from the usual Sicilian, Giri responded with the Pirc defense 11.....e5 2. NF3 Nf6 3. Giri launched an attack and sacrificed his knight three his bishop to open up lines toward his king.

So defended well, but Giri persevered and scored the reversal when the Filipino blundered.

Smart Gilas' loss is Lebanon's gain

REMEMBER CHARLES THE 6-FOOT-11 Smart Gilas trapper with an attitude, who was being groomed for naturalization as a Filipino?

As you all know, he was dropped from the team some months back because he proved too difficult to handle. Gilas was in Israel at the recent Dubai Cup when he scored 29 points for Lebanon to beat his former team Smart 65-64.



IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

The other day I had the opportunity to chat with Gilas' Lebanese coach, Fouad Abouchacra, who's here in Manila on business and a little pleasure.

A guest of Sta. Lucia governor Boddy Encarnacion, coach Fouad said he was very pleased with the performance of Giles, who was a head man during his brief stint in Manila.

"He's a great player. We signed him up to a three-year contract," said Fouad.

* * *

Was there a sudden transformation since Smart Gilas, I wondered.

"No, he's still the same G2 Giles with problems and emotional baggage on and off the court. The key was to find the right way to handle him," said Fouad.

Kindness and repetition were best really the key words. The very 1 smiler shred it, he was given as much attention as a baby requires, and the coach and manager have to be repetitive in expressing what they want out of him.

To ensure productivity, Fouad told Giles is closely monitored by his staff 24/7.

Giles' new team Al Riyadi was runner-up to Iran in the Dubai Cup and is the current champion of Lebanon's commercial league.

* * *

Fouad is in Manila to look for sporty therapists who are interested to work in Lebanon, a small country in West Asia with a population of only three million.

He said he is also working out a program to bring young Lebanese aggregated 10 to 18 years to the Philippines so athletes can which will include basketball clinics, a mini competition and an island tour, among others.

* * *

The PBA gets a dash of feminine touch when the league enters the 8-meal round of the ongoing Philippine Cup.

I thought PBA chair Lito Alvarez had completely forgotten about his plans to include a female referee in the league. But he's just busy as he's always been, but just a few days ago, he informed me that a ladies' basketball competition will precede the PBA doubleheader during the best-of-seven final series this conference.

"No, I have not forgotten about Ladies' basketball. I think playing in the same venue during the PBA championship round would be a good exposure," said Lito.

But that's not all. The chair is also planning a three-on-three tournament for the ladies in the next conference.

"Perhaps we can hold it in between games. I'm talking with the PWBA's Rita Fernandez regarding the mechanics," said the PBA chair of the board.

* * *

While the PBL is all set to roll off on Feb. 13 with eight teams, commissioner Chito Trinidad said he is committed to push through with his assignment to scout Manny Pacquiao's training in the United States for Q&A television.

Chito was at the press conference hosted by the Philippine Boxing Hall of Fame Foundation chairman Brian Viloria at the Manila Hotel on the eve of his departure for Los Angeles last Friday.

He face still a bit swollen from the beating he got from Colombian Carlos Tamara. Brian admitted he wasn't sure if he would be able to box the thing, although he said he'd "rather die during the thing he loves than live doing something I don't."

Brian started boxing at 5. He is now 28 years old.

Apart from retiring in the ring, Brian has many other options.

"It's a matter of choosing the right one," he said, adding that he has always wanted to be a reporter.

Pressed for a wedding date, he said that he and his fiancée Erica Nonato are in no rush to get married.

SPORTSWATCH

Non-Master chess Feb. 6

THE MAGNOLIA NON-MASTER CHESS Tournament I will be the club open rapid rating kicks off on Feb. 6, 10 a.m. at the 6th floor Pres Bldg., Boni Soledad corner Ayala Sts., Bgy. Ugong, Pasig City.

The champion will get P1,000, 2nd place P3,000 and 3rd place P1,000 plus trophies in the event supported by Mayor Robert Benitez, Rep. Roman Romulo Tambunting, Brgy. Com Boni Chairman Jun Vitola, Magnolia Health Inc. Brenda and John's Bakeshop.

Standard registration fee is P250 and entries fee is P150 for the mini-event. Send by mail to Club Secretary Ed Ong through adviser Dr. Bong Perez. For details, call Cecil Pichay 0923-5291965, Dr. Perez 6402314, 5834006, 0915-7237552, Bina Kayabyab 8863978.

BY TOP CHOICE
Action Lions UP

Softball Fall season semifinals on

By Marc Anthony Reyes

REAL TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY and Globe Asiatique will try to make the most of their twice-to-beat edge over their respective rivals today as they vie for final slots in the Softball Philippines-Fall season at the Rizal on Sports Complex.

The RTU Raiders, the only unbeaten squad after the double-round elimination, gave up against the No. 4-ranked team Eastwood Tigers at 6:30 a.m.

The GA clippers will battle Phivtex-PAU in the other Final-Four at 11:30 a.m.

If RTU and GA fail in their initial attempts to reach the finals, the deciding Game 2 will be held immediately after their respective games.

Tuesday was in contention to make the top two after downing Phivtex-Philippine Air Force last Sunday 7-5. But Tuesday later dropped a 2-1 loss to the Raiders, who clinched the No. 2 slot due to the better run-differential quotient that broke the three-way tie for second among GA, Tigers and Phivtex-PAF.

The Final Four winners will dispute the crown of this maiden season of the first actual pro softball league in a best-of-three series starting on Feb. 6.

SPSL-MP team Navy pitcher Lino Rotondo at the helm, RTU dominated the eliminations, even beating its national open component Phivtex-PAF twice in the eliminations.

'Book Run' set

FUTURE STARS Youngsters train at the Bo Rich Inter-national School during the Junior NBA basketball clinic recently. The clinic was handled by former basketball great Ronnie Magsanoc and PBA coach Jeethroe Ryan Gregorio. The Spalding balls used during the sessions can also be purchased at Phillips stores.

'Book Run' set

A FUN FUN FUN AND WITH CAUSE KICKS OFF at 6 a.m. today with Some 2,000 to 3,000 runners from all over the country are expected to join in the annual Book Run at Global City in Taguig.

The Book Run is organized by the Ayala Foundation, a group led by actor Dingdong Dantes, which hopes to raise funds for school libraries that were damaged by last year's devastating typhoons.

The fundraiser, which was originally conceived to provide scholarships to underprivileged students, has recently launched Ophir Pendant Marathon to help replenish the books in school libraries that were affected by Tropical Storm Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng.

The foundation's event is supported by Sta. Marina Covent Tuna and is co-organized by the National Bookstore.

Interested parties may join by logging on at www.pinoyrunning.ph or by signing up at the RUN station in Bonifacio High Street. Entry fee is P400.

Escalante seeks Mini-ROK Challenge crown

PROMISING YOUNG JOCKEY MARVIN Antonio Escalante "Jonel" Escalante of Tuason Racing School continues on a new challenge as he competes in the Mini-ROK Challenge of the 2010 JAGODE EQUUS Championship Series kicking off today at the Carmona Circuit, Philippines.

A member of the PBF Team that competed in the World Racing Championship in Macau last October, the 11 year-old La Salle-Zobel 5th Grade student hopes to hand on that experience as give his title quest a big push this year.

Escalante has shown consistency in the last three legs of the Magnolia Pure Water Karting Super Series last year under the tutelage of multi-titled karting champ Mike Tuason.

He rounded up third overall in the National Karting Series with 204.5 points following his impressive third place finish at the Enchanted Kingdom and his runner-up feat in the championship leg at the Clark International Speedway.

"This is a prelude event before the National Series this March, and the competitors here will prepare me better to my quest for this year's Mini-ROK crown," said Escalante.

"Coach Mike was a big help and with the full support of my parents, the mechanics and crew, I'm very optimistic on my chances. Our mission," Escalante said.

"He's a fast learner, it took only a few months for him to master the techniques. I taught him and I believe he'll go a long way in this sport," added Mike.

KUCALA. Future star

No place like home for young badminton star

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AFTER SEEING TWO FOREIGN STARS designed to develop her into an international badminton star, Malvinner Ann Grace Alcala is hoping local officials would nurture the task of shaping up a potential shuttlecock standout.

"If we can make it here in the Philippines, we will just stick here," said Malvinner Ann's dad, former national shuttler Melvin Alcala, who is also her coach.

"The only thing we need to improve," added Alcala of his 14-year-old daughter, who is already ranked 105 in singles and in the top 20 in the 14-under category.

Alcala revealed that he received an offer from Indonesian Olympic gold medalist Susy Susanti and husband Alan of Astec to train Malvinner Ann in Jakarta for good.

"We spent two months in Indonesia last year (2008), and maybe they saw need her talent and gave her an offer," said Alcala. "But that was too rough a decision for us to make."

A similar offer, Alcala said, was made by a club based in the United States which also dangled a US stint sending for his daughter and co-haven to train for the 2016 Olympics.

On both occasions, Malvinner Ann — or Pace as her close friends would have been "adopted" by foster parents.

The father and daughter hogged all, however.

"The skills are there but she still needs the mentality which an international experience can provide her," said Alcala of the country's No. 1 junior player.

Last year, Pace helped the RP junior team bag bronze medals in Asian-level tournaments in Sri Lanka and Japan.

The Philippines, with Alcala at front and center, also landed in the top 10 of the World Junior Championships — a feat unseen on Newman Set, the country's best ever finish.

Alcala said the eldest among his four kids learned to love the sport at an early age and believes that, at 5-foot-7, will be a formidable all-around player soon.

"She started to tag along with me when she was six but at eight years old she began competing already," said the elder Alcala. "She progressed fast."

Sustaining that progress is Malvinner's worry now.

Patriots host Dragons in ABL semis duel today

By Jasmine M. Payo

THE PHILIPPINE PATRIOTS FIRMARE THE Senoir BasketBall League semifinal Se ventos for the first top Manila Liverpool Drag ons are just an inphrase of their chances in the best of three series.

"We really have a hard time playing against them," said Patriots coach Louie Alas. "For us to beat Manila, we have to match their intensity and control the boards."

The Patriots, who secured homecourt advantage after topping the eliminations at 11-4, collide with the Dragons in Game 1 of their home-away home duel at 4 p.m. today at the Theatre Ejercito Arena in Pasig City.

"We achieved the feat of beating every team in the league at least once, so we have proven we can win against anyone," Dragons coach Gab Chong Hunt told Malaysia's New Straits Times.

The Dragons dained the last semifinal berth with a 7-6 record that included a surprise 77-59 dumping of the Patriots in their third and final elimination encounter last Jan. 9 at the Malta Stadium in Malabon City.

"They're no pushovers," said Alas. "They've been relying so much on their outside shots. It's almost like a Korean style of play where they drive and kick, so our main focus will be on defense."

The Singapore Slingers, who also secured homecourt advantage with a second-best 10-1 slate, battle the No. 3 Indonesian Santa Ursula Brillante in the other semifinal pairing at 4 p.m. today at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Propped up by new import Gabe Freeman, the Patriots also aim to bank on the consistent double-double production of their second conference reinforcement, Jason Dixon, and the defensive efforts of locals Sonny Baclao and Elmer Espiritu.

"Nay and Elmer are delivering a lot of the intangibles," said Alas. "They provide a lot of help defensively."

AIMED. Que doesn't want to get too confident.

THE THIRD ROUND SCORES:

219—C. Stolz (2-3-5-71-73)	219—C. Stolz (2-3-5-71-73)
220—A. Rockett (3-7-70-72)	220—A. Rockett (3-7-70-72)
224—C. Ardina (4-7-8-74-74, K. Dimmitt (6-9-77-77)	224—C. Ardina (4-7-8-74-74, K. Dimmitt (6-9-77-77)
225—T. Kubota (5-7-9-67, S. Hama (10-12-15-73)	225—T. Kubota (5-7-9-67, S. Hama (10-12-15-73)
226—J. Rollins (8-12-13-73)	226—J. Rollins (8-12-13-73)
228—M. Pang (10-13-15-74, M. Ferrer (8-10-73-75, S. Kubota (7-11-16-74)	228—M. Pang (10-13-15-74, M. Ferrer (8-10-73-75, S. Kubota (7-11-16-74)

TCC INVITATIONAL

Que survives windy day, leads by six

By Mauro B. Castillo

SILANG, LAGUNA—ANGELO QUE widened his lead to six strokes after three rounds of The Country Club Invitational with a courageous one-over-par 71 on a course that showed its teeth for the first time yesterday.

Although starting bogey-bogey and closing with another on the 18th, Que still pulled convincingly away as scores ballooned because of the blustery gusts that played havoc on approach shots and turned the greens light-running fast.

The 21-year old, who won the 80th Open two years ago and saw action for the first time in the British Open last year, had a 207 54-hole aggregate as he took the inside track on the P1.45 million purse put up by PCSO to celebrate its 43rd year.

Defending champion Artemio Murakami drained out a 72-footer from the second place, six strokes behind at 213, with lady amateur Jennie Ardina signing for a 74 like Akanon Dumandan to be a further stroke back.

It took the veteran Frankie Minoza to survive an unforgiving course and post a 67 to reach into the top five in a tie with veterans Rastid Rivera, who fired a 72, and two-time winner Jovic Dagoonan, who struggled to a 73.

The 36-year old legend from Bukidnon, who will campaign in the European Tourney this year, bogeyed the last hole to lose his par saves with five birdies on a day when rivers draining out was a threat in itself.

Joonsel Rasa, the first round leader, counted birds to watch after shooting a 78 and kissed his chances goodbye. He started the day just two strokes behind Que after a 67 and a 71 and gave one today's final round nine strokes off the pace at 216.

"Nothing is for sure, especially in golf," Que, who opened up with back-to-back 68, said when asked whether his lead is enough guarantee of a second win in the tournament just like Dagoonan.

"In 2007, I was coming back from four strokes down to beat Elmer Salvador," he said. "But of course, having a six-shot lead would make me play a bit relaxed somehow. I will still have to get a good rest and enjoy because (my concern) won't give it (title) to me."

Amateur Mark Fernando had six bogeys without a birdie as he struggled on the back greens for a 76 and a 220 total like Mars Hyung another Asian Tour regular who also had a 76, and reigning BF Open champion Ernie Gonzales who had a 79.

"If I win tomorrow (today), I will jump to the legion (equalling the 18th fairways)," the 20-year-old Manilenio, who won by a record 13 shots over Que last year, said. "That's how impossible our situation is."

Strokes that played against the wind were almost unfathomable. Saying a few Que-par 4 180s, which Que described as "playing like a par 5."

In fact, the 424-yard finishing hole yielded no birdie and gave up only 11 pars. Penalty, one of the longest holes on the area, had a 6 second for his second shot but came up short, needing a fortified up and down to save bogey.

Not a single birdie came on No. 2, a 611-yard par-5, where Que eared drives distance and a 2-iron to reach the green. He eventually three-putted for one of 13 bogeys the field was able to muster there.

'Seniors' rule Eagle Ridge golf tourney

SENIOR PLAYERS PUSO MING-manzo and Uriel Sailors broke out of their long slumps by topping their respective divisions in the 54-hole Seniors Classic II golf tournament recently held at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Competing against younger players in the regular men's division, Mapanzanas fired an impressive one-over-par 73 for an 11-under 349 to top the three-weeks-old event formed Cupat Hon Jin Duk in the tough Class A division.

Hakam, a director of Eagle Ridge, led the winners of the seniors competition after he fired a par 73 then topped Study Vibandor in the conducted with a better back-nine score in the Senior Lpbsy.

Park Tae Bong ruled Class B, Benjamin Chin won in Class C, Tommy Uytiapco prevailed in Class D and Lee Ae Wan came out on top in Senior E of the event that kicked off another year-long series of tournaments for members of the country's largest golf and country club.

TAEKWONDO CHAMPS. The Rizal Technological University taekwondo team celebrates with RTU president Dr. Jesu O. Placido (top) and (from row, the three-time Olympic champion Dr. Leroy Cornard (second from right) during the awarding ceremony of the 23rd SCUAA-MOR taekwondo competitions held at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City. The RTU taekwondoists swept all 11 gold medals at stake to edge the event's archrivals Philsports.

TJ Giants, Texters...

[illegible] ART

[illegible] and it's incumbent up-on us to make our counter in Game 2."

The Tropang Texters zeroed in double-digit leads early before Ginebra's Jason Castro and Jimmy Alapag before surviving the Kings' late outburst in Game 1.

"They made a fantastic run, but we were prepared for it," Reyes said that's what ticked us through," said Reyes after the Tropang Texters nearly wasted a 22-point advantage.

The Texters similarly salvaged their cross-town opener as James Yap and Rupert Yap came through with clutch baskets in their 93-81 triumph last Friday.

"We're expecting Ranidon Hotter to play again with their hearts out on Sunday so we just have to be ready," said Reyes. "We're [illegible] Let's just [illegible] respect) way back in the first round. That's only seven points. My having a little success now, it will be the same respect we'll give them, as we'll always be on our toes."

James Yap, who pumped in 20 of his 21 points in the first half, also knocked in a crucial three-pointer in the closing minutes.

"He was proactively getting the same shots in the elimination round, but it's now all falling in," said Espiritu. "Nothing really special, probably he mind is clearer. He knows he has to step up big time in order for us to go to the next level."

The Texters rallied despite big offensive threats Jeff Chan and Willie Miller, who were limited to single-digit scoring efforts.

Meanwhile, will remain a marked man for the Giants as Ginebra's import Jawad Williams will square up with 17 points, six assists and five rebounds.

The Tropang Texters, meanwhile, drew a strong start from Castro and Alapag, who finished with a combined 29 points.

The Kings, who finished a notch higher than the Tropang Texters in the eliminations at 6-5, converted back-to-back setbacks for behind Enrico Villanueva and JC Intal after rallying by as many as 22 points.

"When you take a look at Jimmy Alapag's great run in the second second, it was really the role of Intal, Dennis Tubid and Crystal Bagtas who carried them," said Reyes. "We thought if we shut down one of those three, we would have a chance to win the game. Unfortunately that's what happened, we were able to limit Tubid."

Bagtas finished with 12 points, while Tubid finished with only a bucket on a 1-of-8 shooting clip.

Cailao-Jimenez captures Sta. Elena Cup

ANTONIO CAILAO AND DINO JIMENEZ shared the limelight with the high-profile tandems of Basher Garcia-Children Books and Cristobal-Cuisine de Provence as the recent Sta. Elena Cup members-guest golf course, held in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Cailao, a 20-handicapper, and his 18-handicap guest partner Jimenez beat their handicaps with scores of 76 and 83, respectively, for a 159 aggregate that won them the coveted title of the event which had Lexus and Omega as major sponsors.

Garcia, the former PBA commissioner, and Smithson Asian Games gold medalist Ibeda took the low gross award with their 81 and 78 points, respectively, and a 133 total.

Sending the show were top gun Sta. Ana Silk, a fun Elenan member, and Angelo Que, who could have easily romped off with the top awards had they been eligible. Ando shot gross rounds of 86-84 and Que 86-87.

The trophies stoked a total 80,000 worth P1.2 million that saw players come in close to winning. Lucky entries among the 180 participants were home with a Caribbean Cruise on board the world's largest cruise ship and grocery Omega watches that were raffled off.

The other sponsors were Tanon, Tanod, Monaco, Dowel, Canon Office Hub, Kurt Plaza/Yamaha, Sta. Elena Properties, Sweetline's, Isuzu and Bargad King.

The winners in Class A were Victor Tanjuico and Swiss-based Moeller McKay who combined for a net 130. Class B went to Nico Cuerva and Raymond Lucban who matched the 140 of Ben Lim and Arthur Fido then won in the tiebreak, and the Class trophy was won by Jonathan Tang and Bernadette Wong with their 144.

Sunday SPORTS

Lito Teddyvic S. Melendres

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Serena bags 5th title

SERENA Williams celebrates a point against Jarmila Gajdosova during their clash at the Australian Open. AP

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—SERENA Williams got an end to Jarmila Gajdosova's hopes of a Grand Slam title on her return from retirement with a 6-0, 3-6, 6-2 victory in the Australian Open final on Saturday.

Williams embraced a determined challenge from Slovak before securing her fifth Australian Open title and 12th Grand Slam singles championship.

Slovak, who had spent the second set pepper-potted Lleyton Serena, couldn't match her fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters' feat of returning to her Grand Slam crunchtech two months. Clijsters took last year's US Open on her return from a two-year retirement after giving unwanted and having a daughter.

Williams won the last four games Saturday to clinch the championship in just over two hours, falling on her back in celebration after match point before shaking hands with Hewitt at the net.

Still, it was an impressive run by Hewitt.

The unseeded and unranked Hewitt then beat four seeded players en route to the Australian Open final, including No. 9 and Olympic gold medalist Elena Dementieva in the second round.

Hewitt saved two break points to hold for 3-3 in a long game run to the second set, winning 13 of the last 14 points in a dominant finish to the set. She maintained the superiority early in the deciding set, recording that to 18 of 19 points before Williams held serve to level the third set at 3-3.

Williams, with her right thigh and left knee heavily taped as it had been for much of the tournament, staged her own resurgence, breaking Hewitt in the next game to go up 5-3.

Williams' 12th singles major matched American great Billie Jean King's career total.

The men's final between Roger Federer and Andy Murray will be held Sunday night, where Murray will attempt to become the first British man since Fred Perry in 1936 to win a Grand Slam singles.

The Australian Open is Murray's 17th Grand Slam tournament, which is how many attempts Federer needed before winning the first three of his 16 Grand Slam crowns seven ago against Mark Philippoussis.

Federer joked about the British drought after his semifinal win on Friday.

"I know he'll like to win the first for British tennis since, what is it: 1(0),000 years?" Federer joked.

Murray smiled Saturday when told of Federer's comment.

"I'm only here since his 22 and a little bit. But, yeah, it's been a long time. It's going to be tough." AP

San Miguel Pale Pilsen re-invents Happy Hour in new campaign

16 January 2010, Home Depot, Ortigas Center, Pasig City : The country's biggest beer brand, San Miguel Pale Pilsen is hosting tonight another coolest year of travel-worthy events, kicking off with a well-meaning brand campaign that promotes the value of camaraderie and genuine friendship.

The newly-launched "Pilsen Time" is a program of the San Miguel Brewery Inc. flagship product, San Miguel Pale Pilsen, as SMB's opening salvo for both the new year and the new decade. The Marketing Team describes the six-month long campaign as an attempt to recreate the haze of drinking San Miguel Pale Pilsen as what the iconic brand was created for over a century now.

The team adds that the program aims to "provide fun-loving Filipinos with an exciting venue where the barkada can regularly meet, exchange honest-to-goodness conversations, be their selves and celebrate after a hard day's work."

Known for staging one-of-a-kind parties and memorable advertising campaigns, San Miguel Pale Pilsen did not leave any stone unturned in communicating the Pilsen Time Re-habit among its target audience. It recently introduced in the airwaves the Pilsen Time-themed jingle with catchy lines "Dinig na sa Tunay na Tatag ng Buo: San Miguel Pilsen Time Na!" which is reminiscent of the Happy Hour concept whose origin, although not defined, is said to be traced to San Miguel Pale Pilsen.

To get the message across among the internet-savvy professionals, a funny commercial dubbed as Rubber Banding comedian Michael V. lookalike legend Ethan "Bebe" Reyes and snow-for-heart Andi Derain Ramsay, is currently made available for online viewers.

The material showcases the different ways on how to open a bottle of San Miguel Pale Pilsen. Should the other lead endorser boring chimp Manny Pacquiao were available during the shoot, he must have demonstrated a trick on how to pop up the crown with his boxing gloves on, one San Miguel Pale Pilsen commercials fan enthuses.

During the media launch, endorser Michael V. revealed that the brand had made it extra special for its enthusiasts nationwide to extend the Pilsen Time Na experience starting January 22: poor Friday nights will never be the same again as the San Miguel Pale Pilsen Peanuts Promo brings you free pulutan for you and your barkada! Catch this promo in selected Mang's Manila, North and South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao bars only until March 12. And the fun doesn't just stop there, from January 23 to March 12, get a chance to win the special limited edition beer mug (redeem with sponsored Pilsen Time Mug name drops) in select bars in Central, North and South Luzon areas by playing the Pilsen Time Pantrivia Game especially brought to you by the Pilsen Time barker.

So what are you waiting for? Grab your favourite beer, San Miguel Pale Pilsen Pilsen Time Na Kalokasan!

For more information on the Pilsen Time Na promos, log on to www.sanmiguelpalepilsen.com.ph

Soaring Hawks ice season sweep of Celtics; Cavs score

HIGH FLYING Atlanta Hawks forward Josh Smith elevates for a jam in the second quarter of their NBA basketball game against the Boston Celtics Friday in Atlanta. AP

ATLANTA—THE SURPRISING ATLANTA HAWKS COMPLETED their first season sweep of the Boston Celtics in 11 years, posting a 109-91 home victory in an Eastern Conference showdown on Friday.

Joe Johnson scored 16 of his 27 points in the final quarter to help the Hawks leapfrog the Celtics in the race for second place in the East with their fourth win of the campaign over Boston.

Dwight Howard added 19 apiece.

"We won't stick our chests out yet, but we can sound straight up and look them eye-to-eye," Atlanta's Jamal Crawford told reporters after the Hawks won for the fourth time against Boston this season.

"It doesn't see don't hate anybody. I think it shows our growth that we can take a season loved against a heavy hand and win."

Crawford, who Boston coach Doc Rivers said before the game needed to be stopped, had 28 points as Atlanta also snared a ball-game shot of the Magic heading into their Southeast Division showdown in Orlando on Valentine day.

"I was kind of fired up," Crawford said reporters, "but I wasn't too worried about it. They outplayed us down, and I'll get back up. I know my team mates got my back."

He had 11 points and four assists in 13 minutes after coming off the bench in the first quarter of a physical game.

"They thought they were going to come in and bully us," Atlanta coach Mike Bibby said. "We had that same mentality. We were going to be physical and protect our home court."

"Bullies come flying around everywhere," said Hawks coach Mike Woodson.

Paul Pierce led Boston's scoring with a season-high 35 points.

In Oklahoma City, Denver's nine-game winning streak came to a sudden end, as the Nuggets were held to their lowest output of the season in a 110-84 loss to the Thunder.

Kevin Durant scored 26 points and Jeff Green added 18 for the Thunder.

Chauncey Billups scored 19 points for the Nuggets, who were without Nba scoring leader Carmelo Anthony for the third straight game due to injury.

Near triple-double

In Indianapolis, the Cleveland Cavaliers notched a seventh straight win by routing the Indiana Pacers, 96-73, and maintaining their hold on the NBA's best record.

LeBron James delivered a season-high 13 assists. He also had 22 points and nine rebounds—the third time in five games he's entered a triple double by a single rebound. Shaquille O'Neal also had 22 points for his season high.

Danny Granger led the Pacers with just 13 points, but he shot 6-for-23 from the field.

In Houston, the Rockets won their home game in four outings, slipping past the Portland Trailblazers, 104-100.

Aaron Brooks scored 33 points...his fifth 30-plus score this season—and Carl Landry added 21 for the Rockets, who've won 12 of the past 13 regular-season meetings with the Blazers in Houston.

Rudy Fernandez scored 25 points for the Blazers.

Strong bench play

In San Antonio, the Spurs collected a strong effort from their bench players to hold off the Memphis Grizzlies, 104-97.

Tim Duncan scored 19 points for the Spurs, who've depth received key Jose Antonio had a 42-22 edge in points off the bench. Roger Mason scored 12 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter and Manu Ginobili finished with 16 points and seven assists.

Gil Mont led Memphis with 26 points.

In Philadelphia, Kobe Bryant scored all but two of his 24 points in the second half as the Los Angeles Lakers won their third straight match with a 99-81 victory over the Sixers.

Allen Iverson scored a season-high 33 points for the Sixers.

In New Orleans, Lael Deng scored 26 points, including a putback with 6.2 seconds left, to requisition to force overtime, and the Chicago Bulls went on to beat the Hornets, 109-106.

Derrick Rose added 18 points for the Bulls, including nine more thereas that put Chicago ahead for good in overtime. The Bulls finished a season-long, seven-game road trip with their fifth consecutive victory.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Earl Boykins hit a jump shot with less than a second to play to give the Philadelphia 76ers an 88-87 victory over the Nets.

It was the 5'5Boykins' first win since guards Gilbert Arenas and Javaris Crittenton were suspended over a gunsin the locker room controversy. Reuters, AP

INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Meralco to implement 2-hour rotating brownouts in parts of Marikina, Manila, QC, Bulacan and Cavite due to outage at Sual power plant. National Grid Corp. has placed entire Luzon grid on red alert.

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Business/Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Sunday BIZ

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Manila Hotel gets its sexy back

98-yr-old institution gets long-delayed makeover

MANILA Hotel, which first opened its doors in 1912, is out to win back old clients and reel in new ones.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FOR A LONG WHILE THERE, THE GRAND Dame let herself go.

The historic Manila Hotel, which hosted such familiar names as General Douglas MacArthur, the Beatles and His Royal Highness Prince Charles, did not invest enough in the daily maintenance work and grand multimillion pour-changes-for-herald have allowed it to retain its appeal and keep up with changing customer tastes.

And as corporate clients, as well as leisure travellers who could no longer stay on nostalgia alone, gradually left and transferred their considerable business to the more modern luxury hotels that now round the Makati and Ortigas central business districts.

But as the country's first five-star hotel nurses closer to its 100th birthday, Manila Hotel is getting itself back into serious shape to lure them back in.

The first series of business was to invest in the long-delayed renovation of the

Manila Ho

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PLDT

Momentum comes to those who know . . . and do

HOW DO LEADERS GENER-ate positive momentum? It's very simple: by learning and then applying what they have learned.

In the knowledge economy, leaders are distinguished by their ability to process information and put it to use.

There are three ways in which leaders interact with information, and each impacts momentum.

1) Ignorance

"The world is full of perpetual ignorance. It is satisfied with your opinions and content with your knowledge."—Elbert Hubbard

What you don't know can hurt you. Just ask Circuit City.

In March 2007, the company chose to lay off its highest paid, most knowledgeable employees in favor of cheaper talent.

The result? Customer service nightmares.

Complaints skyrocketed as inexperienced workers replaced seasoned salespeople. By the end of 2008, the electronics superstore had filed for bankruptcy.

Whenever a company ceases to learn or reduces its storehouse of knowledge, decline swiftly follows.

In today's climate, change happens too quickly for businesses to forego learning. Unless leaders make a concerted effort to gather information and re-educate themselves, their organizations will suffer the inquisitive incineration of ignorance.

2) Negligence

"Negligence is the vice of the soul, that corrodes through all deliberately withheld information from customers.

To date, the company has paid out millions of dollars in court-ordered settlements, and is on the hook for millions more.

When companies refuse to act on important information—either due to apathy or wicked intentions—then they are said to be negligent.

Philip Morris failed to expound properly to the informed. Out of its disposal, namely that its products fostered addiction and had adverse health effects. In the end, the company paid dearly in financial penalties and lost significant momentum.

3) Action

An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage.—Jack Welch

Big business doesn't always equal heartlessness. In 1907, Merck realized it had a drug that could counteract river blindness, a disease endemic to impoverished regions.

At great expense to its goodwill, Merck agreed to provide the drug (a all who needed it, as long as they needed it. To the 21st years since making that commitment, the company has provided over 400 million treatments.

Merck's public image was boosted exponentially as a result of its generosity.

The first and brightest minds in the pharmaceutical industry flocked to Merck to associate themselves with an organization that genuinely seemed to care.

By putting its knowledge to work in such a benevolent way, Merck enjoyed a surge of momentum.

If you're looking for a surefire source of momentum, then make every effort to learn—and to turn what you learn into action.

Yes, learning can be a costly endeavor.

You may have to open your wallet to purchase resources and provide training opportunities for your people.

However, at the end of the day, you cannot afford to neglect the pursuit of knowledge.

(For leadership training requirements, please call Jospa's Leadership Consultancy at 8872614 or 7004833 and look for Orlando. You can also email us at orlando.bagtas@gmail.com.)

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

Manila Hotel gets its sexy back

From page B1

98-year-old hotel, and the new owners of the hotel led by businessman Emilio T. Yap have opened up their wallets and let go of millions to see that those renovations bring Manila Hotel to the 21st century.

Renovations started in the last quarter of 2008, starting with Makabar Palace, the Manila Hotel's Chinese restaurant. Sweeping improvements of the pool, gardens and guest rooms followed in the first quarter of 2009, then the spa and health club in the second quarter of 2009.

The rooms in the entire main building were refurbished while those in the Tower section underwent full renovation. All 500 rooms will be touched by the renovations.

"Our renovations around the hotel revolve around one objective. And that's elevating our lobby standards to create an unforgettable hotel experience," Manila Hotel President Marcelo S. Elio Jr. told the business.

"In the next nine months, we will continue to deftly balance tradition and innovation—and to make that fusion apparent in our outlets and amenities—to stronger than before," added Manila Hotel General Manager Leon Kokkers. "We are, after all, the country's first five-star hotel. And the legacy of service and luxury that we have preserved throughout the years will get better and better with time."

The changes go all the way to the amenities and features of the guest rooms. These include **a waterproof television in the bathroom**, **Egyptian bathroom essentials**, and a **walk-in dressing area** for those who cannot have hammer-blind, **high speed Internet access is available**.

Kokkers said the renovation at such a grand scale was made more difficult by the need to keep in touch of what makes the Manila Hotel unique.

At one time, the Manila Hotel or Hotel Elizalde was the standard of opulence and the essence of Manila. And traces of those bygone days can still be found in abundance, such as the new and improved grand lobby—with its original Amorsolos and chandeliers of expensive cigars, crystals and brass—and the Filipiniana themed suites with a perfect view of the famed Manila Bay sunset that have appointed to such luminaries as author Ernest Hemingway, astronaut Neil Armstrong and actor Marlon Brando.

"As a testament to our legacy of luxury complemented by genuine Filipino hospitality, we are now undergoing major renovations to keep up with society's demanding needs," Kokkers said. "This transformation is not easy especially when the original one is a masterpiece in itself."

"We therefore make sure that as we complement Manila Hotel with the conveniences and modernity of the present times, we maintain to preserve our rich history and the elegance of the past. Further, we are in a constant quest to elevate our level of service, ultimately treating every guest as royalty," he added.

That the investments are coming in at a time of great global economic uncertainty confounds many observers. Because while others are cutting down costs, the management of Manila Hotel is spending on renovations and new amenities.

He said, however, that these investments would pay off in the end.

"We are optimistic about the market and we believe that our guests deserve the very best. This ultimately makes all of the improvements worth it. Our guests can expect that this is just the beginning," Elio said. "The all-new Manila Hotel will be a landmark in Asia that will rank alongside the world's finest hotels such as Raffles in Singapore, The Ritz in Paris and The Mandarin Oriental in Bangkok."

"Manila Hotel is not here to compete directly with the other hotels. We are here to create a category of our own. Besides, Manila Hotel will not be regarded as the Grand Dame and considered part of the patrimony of the country for nothing," he added.

Now all the Manila Hotel hopes for is that travelers will go and see how it is getting its way back.

THE HOTEL'S renovations started with the Makabar Palace.

THE CHAMPAGNE Room, with that Old World Europe feel, remains one of Manila Hotel's most popular restaurants. (Right) All guest rooms of the hotel will have a new look and feel. (Bottom) Enjoy cocktails at the Sea Breeze.

NEW GENERATION

Samsung gears up 2010 with high-end notebooks and netbooks

SAMSUNG

Cordillera coffee farms expanding

By Dolores Cihua
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE CORDILLERA IS poised to become the country's Arabica coffee capital this year with the expansion of coffee plantations in Mt. Province and Benguet, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo's regional adviser.

Thomas Killip, presidential assistant for Cordillera affairs and concept of the barrelers of the Sagada Coffee Council, said that since 2005, when his group advocated the production of Arabica, "we have observed an extensive and intensive coffee growing."

It has been a regular farming activity in the Cordillera, Killip said, pointing out that farmers and councilors engaged to landscape mining sites were also planting coffee trees.

The Sagada Coffee Council in the scenic Mt. Province town has allowed 958 hectares of land for coffee production. Sagada now has 6,000 coffee trees in its northern villages.

The council has also called on residents to stop catching civet cats, locally known as "musk," to enhance the production of an exotic Arabica variant called "coffee alamid."

Arabica is the preferred variety in the local and global markets due to its full-bodied taste, according to a report from the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera.

The increasing coffee demand is ahead of Arabica production because of its cool climate and abundant rainfall, it said.

Exported income from coffee production was placed at P1.4 billion.

The DA identified Benguet, Mt. Province, Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra and Apayao as expansion areas. The DA targets to expand to 40,000 has in these provinces, especially in the forests.

Growing Arabica coffee under forest trees encourages highland farmers to preserve watersheds while earning income, the report said.

FARMERS ready to load rising demand for coffee.

Coffee plants need minimal care and believers soldier other crops that require full doses of chemical inputs that harm the soil and environment, Killip said.

He said big and small coffee companies were forging partnerships with local growers to improve production and boost the industry.

The DA report said 552 has of coffee plantations in the region should be rehabilitated to increase yield.

"The good news is there is a continuous demand for Arabica coffee, posting an annual growth of 2 to 5 percent since 2004, a change in Filipinos' drinking habits due to vice growth, proliferation of trendy coffee shops, local retailers and processors which will fuel the growth of the industry," it said.

Big catch for Guimaras

GIVE A MAN FISH AND YOU FEED A DAY but a shop Dutch firm how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

These words of Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu held true years when dubbing dimensions for corporate social responsibility.

The 2006 oil spill I 5 miles off the coast of Guimaras island affected 220 kilometers of shoreline, 454 hectares of mangroves and displaced fisherfolk.

As response, the Philippines and Petron Foundation collaborated in partnership with the Southeast Asian Fisheries and Development Center (SEAFDEC) and the local provincial government, to provide a sustainable, alternative livelihood for fishermen in the municipality of Nueva Valencia, who were most affected by the spill.

The pilot program, the following year provided a mainstream model farm with a core group of 30 fisherfolk from four barangays—San Antonio, Igang, Magamay and Sto. Domingo, taking a season-long training course in all aspects of the milkfish cage culture operation.

Female community members were also given courses on milkfish deboning and smoked fish processing.

At the end of the first phase, the community harvested over 26,300 kgs. of milkfish, translating into gross sales of nearly P2.5 million in October 2008.

To sustain the success of the program, Eni and Petron renewed the partnership in 2008 to benefit more Guimaranons and institute the technology and skills transfer to the beneficiaries.

Seaweed-only training course on milkfish cage culture was conducted from April to October 2009 participated in by 120 fisherfolk from the recipient barangays.

The same seaweed session on aquaculture production systems, stock sampling, feeding practices, cage maintenance, fish health care, harvest, business planning, financial analysis, cooperatives development and management, and marketing of milkfish.

After six months of operations, more than 4,500 kilograms of milkfish were harvested from June to July 2009 valued at over P400,000.

Last month, closing ceremonies for the Guimaras Marketable projects was held at the municipal gymnasium, attended by representatives from Chr, Petron Foundation, SEAFDEC and the provincial government.

Petron Foundation Executive Director Marilou Jose talked about the strategic partnership with proponents and stakeholders.

"The Chr-Petron-SEAFDEC Project not only addressed the need for alternative livelihood for coastal communities affected by the oil spill. It also demonstrated the social responsibility of Chr and Petron and highlighted the important roles of the local government, community based organizations, NGOs and academe in building the capacities at the local levels," said Dr. Isabel Tolosa, Chief of SEAFDEC/Aquaculture Department.

Fisherfolk who successfully completed the training course were given a certificate of completion and their fisherfolk organizations were also awarded their income share from the initial harvests.

"The Biodiversity Livelihood Project for Guimaras has benefited a lot of fisherfolk in the affected barangays of Nueva Valencia. In fact, some of the graduates of the phase I training have been hired and are managing the floating cages owned by private stakeholders in the area," Barangay Magamay chairperson Sofia Rhapsio shared.

Living in a Cashless Society:

Just SWUP it!

Debit cards are the new cash

Vivien May Cheung

Credit cards are here to stay, but debit cards are the new cash. The good news is major card brands are now all linked to ISSSP, so virtually any business can benefit as more shoppers start using their debit cards. SWUP now links up major ATM debit cards through Visa Electron, MasterCard Electronic, BancNet, MegaLink, and ExpressNet in addition to major credit Visa, MasterCard, American Express, JCB, and Diners Club International. Swipe without fuss, the Day of the Debit Card is really here.

> "I'm so sold on PLDT SWUP. I can't wait to use it. I had yet to see a terminal that accepts ALL types of cards—and now SWUP is it."

There are approximately thirty million ATM debit cardholders, and only 70,000 terminals in the country. To close that gap, SWUP provides a full-suite system enabling more debit cardholders to use POS (point of sale) terminals at their favorite retail stores. Now the days of searching for the nearest ATM will be over.

The SWUP terminal has now been programmed to accept all types of cards, enabling more stores to accept both credit and ATM debit card payments. Consumers, on the other hand, get to choose their cards and their bank.

It means never having to queue at an ATM at the last minute, savoring the pleasure of making immediate purchases right then and there, at the very moment of decision. The consumer he is satisfied at the point of sale...and for shoppers like me, that kind of empowerment is undeniable.

SWUP makes it easier on merchants and retailers too, because the easy swipe terminal allows for always-on connectivity. It means no more need for multiple phone lines. SWUP is WPLS-based and not internet-based, so it is faster and virus-free. Apart from this, it reduces fraud. Charges are made on a monthly basis, making it every bit as convenient and easy for the retailer as it is for the customer.

I'm so sold on PLDT SWUP. I can't wait to use it. I had yet to see a terminal that accepts ALL types of cards—and now SWUP is it. The country (but) known for its malls will soon be a true shopper's paradise. If there's one thing we need, it's to create a shopping mecca, one where SWUP machines and terminals abound, where cashless shopping means cashless shopping.

WIRELESS POWER FOR THE ENTERPRISING

Filipinos have every reason to hope in 2010 despite the natural and man-made disasters that battered the country last year. One of the causes for optimism is the newfound power of fighting poverty through entrepreneurship – a quiet revolution that is changing lives and empowering those who take the enterprising path.

One frontliner in the Go Negosyo advocacy of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE), which is backed in no small way by partners like SMART Communications, the country's leading wireless services provider. With their resources and their resolve combined, the Go Negosyo - SMART partnership is a formidable force to power a way out of the poverty cycle.

SMART has given its unconditional support to Go Negosyo's nationwide activities that promotes a winning attitude and entrepreneurial spirit. Among its initiatives are the issuance of special Go Negosyo SMART Bro plug-it modems, the use of its InfoBoard messaging service and its active involvement in Go Negosyo's regional caravans and seminars.

As a result, many Filipinos are now inspired to take the entrepreneurial route in the hope of bettering their lives. A growing number of them – including educator Myrle E. Alferez who leads the MSA Academic Advancement Institute from scratch – are expected to benefit from the wireless enhancements SMART is bringing into its partnership with Go Negosyo.

Alferez, an incurable optimist who dreamt of a decade at age 14 to help her parents and a brood of 12 to make both ends meet, owns a network of 19 tutorial centers and review centers (including one in Cebu) which she has grown since 1988 with a lot of hard work, perseverance and a keen sense of entrepreneurship.

MSA Academic Advancement Institute earned an ISO 9001:2000 certification in 2008, the first and only tutorial and review center in the country to earn the prestigious international recognition for conforming to global standards.

"I'd like overseas Filipino workers and their spouses to realize that they have other income options and that they need not be away from each other. My husband and I have proven this," says Alferez, who asked her OFW husband in 1998 to stop sending money home after only two months of tutoring students earned her enough to cover their household's living expenses.

True to the entrepreneurial spirit, MSA publishes its own books, including seminars, that provide easy and effective ways of learning.

A mentor at heart, Myrle Alferez, gives free math training to public school teachers and students.

MSA equips its faculty to enable them to teach students properly.

> ***"When we partnered with Go Negosyo four years ago, SMART had in mind the need to link aspiring entrepreneurs to each other and to the sources of information that would help them with their business."***
>
> Orlando B. Vea
> SMART Chief Wireless Advisor

Alferez sees the partnership between Go Negosyo and SMART as a catalyst for change empowering thousands of Filipinos to realize their dreams through the entrepreneurial way. Among the wireless enhancements SMART is offering, she plans to avail of the InfoBoard messaging service that can help her with the communications needs of the growing MSA community.

SMART Chief Wireless Advisor Orlando B. Vea is pleased that SMART is able to harness wireless communications technology and equip more Filipinos for their pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities.

"When we started to partner with Go Negosyo four years ago, SMART had in mind the need to link aspiring entrepreneurs to each other and to the sources of information that would help them with their business," he says.

Go Negosyo founder Joe "Joey" Ma. Concepcion III underscores the value of communications in business and cites the need for entrepreneurs to be in touch with one another so they can share best practices.

"We appreciate SMART bringing into the partnership an innovative plus in our entrepreneurial spirit and creativity that provide inspiration for those who aspire to be successful in business," he says.

Concepcion also appreciates the fact that aspiring entrepreneurs, including students and the youth, in far-flung areas can now influence their knowledge base with the Internet access they can have anytime, anywhere in the country through SMART's broadband facilities.

Using the Go Negosyo-SMART Bro Plug-It, for instance, entrepreneurs are able to optimize the potential of their business, promote their products and services through internet marketing, and create better communications with their employees and stakeholders. They can also engage in dealership of the plug-its as an additional source of income.

Through SMART's InfoBoard service, subscribers get free Go Negosyo updates via SMS or text messaging. InfoBoard, a Web-based messaging service, is also used as SMS feedback system for Go Negosyo forums and as a speedy means to reach out to those enrolled in the service.

By supporting forums, exhibits and discussions, SMART is also helping Go Negosyo highlight business opportunities among targeted sectors such as OFWs, government employees, youth and women and among key provinces and cities nationwide.

Myrle Alferez spearheads MSA's multimedia technique for a school in Los Angeles, USA

SMART is involved in Go Negosyo's regional caravans that help promote the culture of entrepreneurship. It also assists Go Negosyo in holding the Negosyo Seminar (Negosem) series on the key principles of starting a business where the resources are facilitated to guess-out sessions called "negosyenars".

Through the partnership, SMART and Go Negosyo propagate Alferez's story, along with other inspiring tales from successful entrepreneurs, to serve as templates and models of entrepreneurship. In this way, they spread the message of hope and empowerment to Filipinos.

Inspiring entrepreneur and educator Myrle Alferez

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RHEA takes the first step in getting the answers she wants from Rafa.

At center, good things happen to special kids

By Jo-Anne C. Pudavan

ONE OF THESE DAYS, RHEA Lasumen-Jiménez will ask her son Rafael questions on how he sees his body feels and he will be able to give an answer.

She hopes that her son will be able to express himself, say what he really feels, rather than some one-side canned replies that Rafael has learned from observing other people.

"There are things I really want to know about him, like 'I want to ask him, 'Rafa, how was your day?' or 'What did you and your friends do?'" says the 35-year-old economics graduate from University of Santo Tomas.

Rafael is 7 years old and has autistic spectrum disorder. While he is able to freely communicate, there are some things he cannot tell his mother.

"A lot of things he says because he needs it, not because he wants to," Rhea says.

And she has taken the first step in getting the answers she wants.

Shifting of priorities

Although managing a therapeutic learning center was far from her mind, Rhea did not have second thoughts when she decided to leave a job she was comfortable with and focus on helping her only son—and others who may need the same care and attention—by putting up SLI Therapeutic Learning Center together with husband Edward.

"I was already a marketing manager that time, but I had to resign from my job because I know I had to give my son more time," she says.

Rhea remembers the day when her priorities began to shift. Rafael was 2 years and 9 months old when his toddler then mother suggested to Rhea to have a doctor check out her son.

"He didn't really behave appropriately in class. He was not speaking yet. He didn't respond to his name when called. He also had several quirks like hand flapping, ride pacing, spinning," Rhea recalls.

But because Rafael was not yet 3 years old at that time, the doctor could not tell her exactly if it was autism or just a delay in the child's development.

"The doctor said that Rafa might be within the spectrum of autism, but unexplored him first under communication disorder. Rafa underwent occupational therapy and speech therapy for six months," Rhea says.

When Rafael turned 3, his doctor confirmed that he has autism.

"I was guilty at first. I felt that I was always away because of my work," Rhea says. "Although, up to now, there is no real known cause of autism."

Rhea wanted to fully understand her son's situation so she immersed herself in the world of autism. She took up a doctorate degree in special education and, in 2008, put up the therapeutic learning center in Diliman, Quezon City.

"I didn't want to be idle. I wanted to focus my attention on Rafa," she says. "In 1 thought it would be having two birds with one stone."

According to Rhea, she had stayed with the idea of putting up her own center ever since Rafael was diagnosed with autism.

"I want to strengthen my son's education. I don't want him to be in special school forever," she adds.

Infant to 16 years old

To date, SLI Therapeutic Learning Center has 20 children. Most of them are cared for by occupational and speech therapists. Its youngest student is 3 years old and its oldest is 16. But the center can accommodate students as young as an infant to those about 30 years old.

SLI Therapeutic Learning Center offers occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy and regular and special education curricula.

"What makes us different is, I'm also a parent. I know how parents think."

She says she shares a special affinity not only with the children in her class but with their parents as well. This translates to a learning center that provides a more hands-on, individual approach.

"We do one-on-one tutoring. But we also do dyad, the good of which is socialization. Here in center, we started to offer a play group, targeting social skills, rules, waiting skills," Rhea says.

SLI Therapeutic Learning Center has eight teachers now—three occupational therapists, four speech therapists and a special education teacher.

"Two of our OTs are board topnotchers from University of Santo Tomas, while our speech therapists belong to the top 20 percent of their class in the University of the Philippines," Rhea says.

Scholarships welcome

She laments that not everyone can afford the price of special schools such as her center. That is why she is also hoping that, someday, she can give scholarships to special children who cannot afford the P400-P500/session standard rate.

"I know that early intervention is very important, that's why we also appreciate scholarships," Rhea says.

For genuine reward, she says, is seeing their students' development.

"Because we know we are instrumental in helping the children," she says.

Rhea sees the improvement first hand.

Rafael no longer spins himself dizzy, or breaks out into hand-flapping spells. Although the young boy who turns 4 in May, still has limited conversational abilities, he can now say "I want this," or "I want that," Rhea says.

"And when he wants, he's either more happy or angry," she adds.

The mother believes that one day, Rafael will be able to communicate

SLI THERAPEUTIC Learning Center's teachers are board topnotchers.

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Cotabato residents chill with icy treat

By Reia May de Guzman
Inquirer Mindanao

KORONADAL, CITY—THERE are days when a busy street near the public market here gets clogged up by a long line of people. Most are children carrying for a home-grown brand of ice candy.

For P5, one can take a break from South Cotabato's sweltering heat courtesy of the ice buko salad being peddled on the streets.

"It burns with milky fruity flavors ... my children love them," says Janice Galimpo, 29, a market vendor. "We make a trip daily to our favorite vendor across the house to buy ice buko salad."

Janice knows whereof she speaks. She is part of a team that produces the ice treat in the fast-become quite a hit in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat provinces.

She reveals that the ice buko salad is made up of pandan, ice cream mate and nata de coco.

Then there's the milk, which complaces "a bounty hour," she says.

The man behind the ice concoction is Francisco Ladeza, 40.

In 2001, he dreamt of a business mainly based on ice cream.

Francisco, who was born in Cagayan de Oro, was a director of a fertilizer company in Sultan Kudarat at that time.

Whenever he felt thirsty, he would climb a tree to pluck a coconut which he would consume right there and then, he says.

That same summer, Francisco talked his wife Jane into open-

WORKERS mix milk, sugar, and strips of coconut, papaya and nata de coco to produce 16,000 pieces of ice buko salad that sells for P5 apiece.

ing up a business.

In 2003, Jane was running a small sari-sari store.

"Let's just try it, and if it won't click (but) we can always look for other businesses," Francisco told his wife at that time.

Jane, now 36, were along with the idea.

The couple (stylishly packed 200 ice candy plastic bags with strips of papaya, nata de coco, coconut meat, and bits of milk.

They placed the filled bags in the freezer (then, the following morning, they packed the bags in ice boxes and sold them from a room just across their house.

In two days, the couple sold

JANE and Francisco Ladeza take pride in their work.

over 200 pieces of ice buko salad worth P1.

The business at the time was one-man. Francisco says, and that prompted him to carefully consider his next steps.

First, he quit his job. Then the couple put up Ladeza Ice Buko Salad. Soon, they raised the production volume to a three-digit piece of the ice treat.

Their business grew, and every neighborhood store in the city began carrying their product.

In the early months, the Ladezas struggled to find the right suppliers for their growing production.

"All papaya growers sell their produce to Dole, the same with [producers of] nata de coco," he says. "I had to beg them to open more and turn some of the papaya and nata de coco for me."

Francisco also recalls how, at one time, all the stores in the city ran out of evaporated milk.

He and his wife searched for milk everywhere—from Gen. Santos to Bukidnon and Davao City, Francisco says.

"I know there was still milk out there, I just had to look for it. I couldn't gamble the quality [of my product], otherwise it would be the end of the business."

A milk distributor solved the couple's problems when the company started delivering 100 cases of evaporated milk to the Ladezas every week. Soon, a sugar company followed suit.

According to Francisco, his vendors would mix up a thousand cans of evaporated milk and eight sacks of refined sugar every week to produce 16,000 pieces of ice buko salad.

To keep up with demand, the couple established a network of three growers to supply their daily needs.

Barely a year after they started operations, the Ladezas' product crossed the borders of South Cotabato to reach municipalities in the Soccsksargen region.

They found a ready market in Cotabato City which would enable them to reach out to potential markets in North Cotabato and Davao del Sur.

"If things turn out okay, by early next year, we can start upscaling (them)," he says.

The Ladeza's have also shared their production secrets with friends in Digos, Sultan

For the Ladeza couple, people, not profits, come first

and Davao.

With the rise in income, the Ladezas decided to expand the production area in their house.

They now maintain a storeroom large enough to contain 16 freezers. They also started hiring workers—17, poor women with children were also tasks to produce the ice buko salad.

Ladeza is also completing a facility that will house the room, workforce, along with the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment for making ice candy.

Francisco admits entrepreneurship is both rewarding and painstaking. The Ladeza are happy with the current setup—his wife takes care of managing the workforce and Francisco looks after the marketing.

In the years passed, businesswives became better. They were able to build a house and send their boy to an international school in Manila. They also now have eight vehicles.

Francisco, who is also a pastor of a church in nearby Lutayan town, is now helping relatives of his family and community.

"This is not only business. I believe God put me in this post to help to the people around me, especially my small relatives who live in poverty," he says.

For the Ladeza couple, people, not profits, come first.

GOINGS-ON

Bistro group bares plans for 2010

Bistro Group, which debuted on its 10th year in Dec. 2009, strengthened its market position and continued its expansion leadership in the local casual dining segment.

Highlights of the 10th year include the addition of two homegrown concepts, Silly Monk, a bar specializing in top-notch drinks and bar chow, which opened at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall in May 2009 and the family grill place, Pig Out, which launched its first branch in Bicutan in Sta. Rosa, Laguna last December.

Bistro also opened the 10th Italianni's store in Bacolod.

Today, there are 10 T.G.I Friday's, 9 Italianni's branches, 5 Fish & Co. and 4 Pizzaperfetta and Tony Roma's outlets. And with Friday's currently making waves in Cebu, Bistro is looking into more commercial opportunities in the coming year.

In 2010, the company is bullish in capturing a bigger market share.

RP embassy in Ireland celebrated

In the spirit of good tidings and strengthening of allegiance and camaraderie, a welcoming reception was held in honor of the newly appointed Philippine Ambassador to Ireland, His Excellency Alfredo Y. Mahilum. The reception was hosted by Consul General of Ireland to the Philippines, Noreen F. Toda and Vice Consul, Robert E. Toda.

It is also a celebration of the newly established, first Philippine Embassy in Dublin, Ambassador Mahilum explains.

"There has always been a good relationship between Ireland and the Philippines. Establishing an Embassy in any sovereign(ties) especially on having a new ambassador-designate to Ireland and further these good relations. And I am proud to be the first to make this Philippine Embassy in Dublin a safe haven for Filipinos and Irish alike."

The welcoming reception was held at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Michael McMurphy in Dublin. The affair was attended by the Minister of Social Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. Minister for Science, Technology and Innovations, Conor Lenihan T.D. and Senator Mary O'Sullivan together with representatives of Enterprise Ireland, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Irish Aviation Board, Industrial Development Authority Ireland, Irish Export Association and the Regional Director of Middle East and Asia for Canada Food Holdings.

Business plan competition on

Young Filipinos are invited to take on the Global Enterprise Challenge (GEC), which has grown into the most prestigious business plan competition in the world for students under 19 years of age.

The program is being delivered in the Philippines by with The One School, this leader in alternative college education in the Philippines, with degrees in Entrepreneurship, Fashion and Interiors.

Teams from Barbados, Scotland, Poland, England, New Zealand, United States, South Africa, Wales, Singapore, Germany, Ireland and Lebanon participated in GEC 2007 held at Cardiff, Wales.

It is going to be a more exciting year as the Philippines will be given the opportunity to clash de arts against other international competitors through a nationwide competition called The One Philippines Enterprise Challenge (TOPEC), which will be held in February.

Winning teams will get the chance to represent the country and compete against thousands of students from hundreds of schools worldwide in the Global Enterprise Challenge in April 2010.

The One School is inviting groups of students or schools from anywhere in the Philippines to field teams composed of two-to-three-eight students under 19 years old for TOPEC 2010.

Interested students or schools can contact The One School at 35 Frederick Road, St. and 1004 Quezon Pl., Makati City, tel. 8174281 or 8114306, www.theoneschool.org

THE LADEZAS and the hands-on manager of the P5 treat that bears their name.

Mall to rise in Benguet's strawberry town

By Dinnah Caribo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—A P366-million commercial complex planned to be built in the public market area here is expected to facilitate after the town's landscape from a flower and strawberry producing economy to a fast urbanizing capital.

Local officials are hoping that the shopping mall would boost the town's bid to become the Cordillera's second major business center after Baguio City.

"The trend now is to erect malls. It's a good attraction for businessmen," Mayor Antonio Galwan said.

He said the three-story building, which would occupy 3.5 hectares territory of the market area, would enhance the town's revenue and attract more capital from investors who found nearby Baguio City already a crowded market.

"The complex would respond to the need to accommodate business in the town whose daily economic activities had grown with too many stakeholders," he said.

But vegetable traders, who used the public parking area for their daily transactions, feared they would be displaced.

Other businessmen said the mall's stalls could provide better competition since the public market has major structures could be refitted to second-class stores.

They said the mall would also restore the town's crafts problem.

Traffic problems and the intersection in front of the public market, which would be fronting the mall later, has become a bottleneck for motorists. Their 4,000 vehicles that pass through the town's main road daily.

Gov. Nestor Fongwen seconded the project, saying it would alter the regressive trading system that has made the municipal and the public market's parking space an issue.

He said he ignored talks about the proposed project last year, only to be surprised that the contract for the mall's construction had already been signed.

"I thought the officials would maintain the parking space which was designed for farmers and vegetable traders during my term," said Fongwen, a former La Trinidad mayor.

Jaime Realty Development Corp. will build the complex as a build, operate and transfer (BOT) scheme for 50 years.

The mall is expected to be finished by 2012, after which it is to sell it at paying rent ranging from P35 to P50.00 per square feet for 20 years.

The town is expected to earn a total sum of P29.9 million before the mall's ownership is transferred to the town government.

Galwan said he was not surprised by the concerns of local businessmen, but he said the project's potential economic benefits far outweighed the disadvantages.

"The mall would become an attraction for investors. We wanted to absorb the spillover of investors from Mt. Province, La Union, Pangasinan and Baguio City," he said.

Interest in arts, crafts spurs interest. . .

From page B2-4

So he put up Rainy Arts and Crafts in January last year, with around P150,000 capital, and started developing and selling high-end products.

Reyes based the business in Pulal town where the wood carvers and craftsmen are.

Product development

By September 2009, Reyes had his first products and began marketing. He talked to bag retailers and e-mailed designers and businessmen people. Many local and foreign designers became interested in the products.

He already has local and foreign buyers and is supplying products to some high-end stores. Maximum number of orders reaches up to 200 pieces in one month.

Reyes says the products are labor-intensive and it takes more than one month to complete the bags because everything is done by hand. Thus, the best craftsmanship is put into each item.

There are others who make wood bags, but Reyes says his bags' designs are unique. His bags are almost scratch-resistant and do not peel easily because of the kind of paint he uses. They also have a leather lining.

"We have unique designs where we incorporate organic materials like shell and scrap hardwood," Reyes says.

He also makes sure he uses only legal wood.

Reyes constantly develops new products, looking for other native materials to use such as shells from Cebu, his inspiration coming from nature's architecture.

His tips for a business to succeed? Reyes says it's all about following your passion and interest.

"You also need to have an eye for detail and quality, an idea about the market and business trends, and of course, you need to have a lot of guts," he says.

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Sunday BIZ

Michelis finds its silver lining

By Clayton Medina
Contributor

FASHIONABLY DESIGNED AND IMPECCABLY finished sterling silver jewelry may be popular with Europeans, but not so much with Filipinos, especially during the late 1990s when Michelis Inc. first established itself in the Philippines.

A sought-after manufacturer of fine silver jewelry in Europe for more than three decades, Mia Fuentenaco thought of crafting her own designs for gifts to friends in 1999 after finding nothing suitable in the local market to give during the Christmas season.

Her efforts were well appreciated, and this inspired her to set up a local retail brand—Michelis.

Mia Fuentenaco and her daughter, Sanya, have grown the Michelis network and brand.

Lovely pieces

Michelis was named after her grandmother, Asuncion Michelis Chanco Fuentenaco, de Iyanda, or Lola Michel. Lola Michel, who created lovely jewelry pieces, was from Pampanga and married a Spaniard who also had roots in Provence, France.

A French-sounding name like Michelis seemed appropriate since the vision from the beginning was to grow company into a global brand, but built on a strong local presence. The first years, however, proved to be tough since the Filipino market did not readily appreciate silver.

As abundant local resource, the metal is considered by many as a trinket, mainly because the pioneering trade in Baguio City specialized in silver mined items.

Filipinos also did not seem to appreciate the major difference between the silver-plated base metal and sterling silver, says Sanya Fuentenaco, Michelis' creative director and Mia's eldest daughter, and even if Filipinos know the difference between the two types of metals, they often regarded Michelis jewelry as too expensive.

Mia and Sanya, however, shared the same firm belief that silver performs much better than other jewelry metals, even during economic downturns, mainly because it is more affordable than gold.

"During a recession, people will not stop buying; they will just think about what they are buying, more so if the product has more value and is well made. The same can be applied to most products in the market, not just jewelry," says Sanya.

Compared to gold, the Fuentenacos believe that because sterling silver is a precious metal that has the most brilliant shine, it would have a wider market appeal mainly because of its affordability.

Even in 2004, when overseas jewelry sales of Mia's export company dipped because of an economic crisis, Michelis managed to survive in the local market and post modest growth. It was a key point for a fledgling business that was trying to establish a brand name as well as the intrinsic value of its products, but the teamwork of mother and daughter managed to pull the business through.

In an effort to educate Filipinos on the value of sterling silver, Michelis solicited the endorsements of several celebrities, including Boy Abunda and Sunshine Cruz.

Price range

"We also introduced new items as collections that are within our market's 'inspiration' buying price range. We have also become more aggressive with our marketing and, as the euro rises, almost our discounting policies," says Sanya.

Eventually, billboards were included in the campaign to raise awareness and to create appreciation among males of the value of silver jewelry.

Ibrahim Fernandez, who represented the Philippines in the second season of Amazing Race Asia, was chosen as product endorser. Publicity and advertising are now standard marketing tools that are used to support retailing.

When Sanya joined the family business in 2005, she just knew she had to augment what she had learned from her interdisciplinary studies at the Ateneo de Manila University with more business management lessons. She enrolled at the University of the Philippines for her masteral in business administration, finishing in 18 months.

Now less dependent on guidance and supervision from her mother, Sanya remembers the other eight stores that sell Michelis jewelry.

MICHELIS colors, pearls and pride is in its silver jewelry.

Research and development

There's even one store in Metro Cebu, the company's first in the Visayas. Others had been opened but these had to be shuttered because they did not run well. But all have provided key valuable and life business lessons.

While the day-to-day management is largely left to Sanya's discretion, Mia still plays a big part in design research and development. But Sanya and her creative team are actively involved.

"As a general guideline, we take old designs and recreate them to make them new. Michelis still have the classic retro design, but it will be a fresh take on it. We also like to create jewelry that follows world trends such as mixing 'nontraditional' material such as leather, neoprene and cold resin for screens," says Sanya.

Designs are kept current by researching and tracking global trends and cutting-edge items into our own look and feel.

"Our designs are getting bolder mostly because our customers are always asking us for new things, to our delight. In the six last years, our designs were deliberately more 'conservative' from our viewpoint. Though at that time, we were already bold. Our customers are braver now when it comes to jewelry choices, and we keep up with them and sometimes like to push the boundaries even wider," she adds.

Commitment to quality

Sanya says excellence in design, quality and workmanship remains Michelis' competitive edge.

"Our mother company, T Cartier, Inc. has been exporting to Europe for years, with clients that have met quality standards local customers find exquisite. So, Michelis offers the same quality as we find that our primary market, the Filipino consumers deserves the best," she says.

Interest in arts, crafts spurs interest in unique wood bag

Text and Photos
By Clarina Cabing-Pobenbanin
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PAETE, LAGUNA—FOLLOWING HIS interest in arts, crafts and furniture, 21-year-old Rod Reyes began a venture that has already captured buyers in the local and international markets.

Reyes markets silk high-end bags made of wood and finished with lacquer, which he says "can last a lifetime."

He is also developing souvenir items such as jewelry boxes.

Ever, with his products' prices ranging from $300 to $1,000 (with previous visitors) in the international market and P2,500 to P5,000 in the local market, Reyes' artists and buyers are steadily increasing.

Right business

Reyes, a BS Biology graduate of the University of the Philippines Los Baños, has been an entrepreneur since he was a student, where he supplied products like rope from Bilian, his hometown, to other places.

After graduating in 1997, he helped in the family's grocery business for one year and then attended to festivals as a free specialist for three years.

When he came back to the country, he put up a restaurant/internet center and reopened his grandfather's century-old "pote" Bilian business using his savings as capital.

But those ventures did not last due to various problems.

At the same time, he was also a business partner in a bag business in Manila. That was where he got exposed to various bag products, including those made of wood.

"I thought of putting up my own wood bag business because through it, my interest in wood, arts and crafts, and creativity would all come together," Reyes shares. Since he was a child, he has always been fascinated with wood, especially furniture, and liked drawing and paper art.

By researching online and talking with store salesmen, he found out that there's a good market for luxury and high-end products.

ROD Reyes, owner of Paeteng Arts and Crafts in Paete, Laguna.

MORE BIZ

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Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor: Thelma Sioson San Juan

Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, the woman behind Philippine visual arts

FABIAN de la Rosa's portrait of Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, 1932, oil

She championed Philippine art at a time when there was low or practically no public regard for them. Ayala Museum will exhibit this week her trailblazing collection of Philippine masters

By Rowena C. Bergo

A REVERED NAME IN artistic and cultural circles, the late Purita Kalaw-Ledesma will always be remembered for helping shape the direction of the visual arts and elevate the stature of Filipino artists.

She championed Philippine art when people were too busy picking up the pieces of their lives after the war, a time when few people paid any attention to artists or their work.

"My mother wanted to be an artist too since it was not a profession one's family would like for their children at that time, she became a patron of fine arts instead," says Ada Makilingan, one of Ledesma's two daughters.

But Ledesma continued to paint in a hobby. Her subjects included her trips to China, nudes, landscapes and portraits. She would often invite the Saturday Group of Artists to their house for painting sessions with a nude model.

"At that time, my sister and I lived across the street. Of course, our husbands were very interested in these sessions. My son who was only 5 years old then would see his grandmother sketching the nude model," Makilingan recalls.

Ledesma's passion for the arts had been inspired by her mother Pura Villanueva-Kalaw. Known as a painter and sculptor, and father Teodoro M. Kalaw Sr., a historian, journalist, scholar, historian, author and statesman.

"Our grandmother was an unusual woman at that time. She attended a law school, an area where mostly writers and poets," Makilingan says. "Our grandfather was the first director of the National Library. He was a very enthusiastic man involved in independence advocacy under Quezon."

Gentle soul

Underneath Ledesma's gentle manner was an independent mind which she fearlessly expressed whenever the demand is necessary.

"She was a quiet and gentle soul. She was never argumentative or confrontational. She was soft-spoken but she was made of steel. She would give way to things she considered minor but in those involving

KARA C1

Purita Kalaw-Ledesma . . .

From page D1

principle, for example, she wouldn't budge. That's why when she made a stand, people respected her," Mahilangan says.

Ledesma never taught her daughters to, Ma. Consuelo, Wally and Ada how to paint. She would get art teachers for them instead. "But she never pushed us to make it a profession," Mahilangan says. "She was a hundred percent housewife, except in her grand fashion. She would often rather service than see to the more important in her life."

Mahilangan also remembers how there most would help her in her school projects. "When I was the editor of the Assumption College magazine, she would bring me to Cesar Legaspi who would help me with the magazine's cover. At that time, who could have known that Legaspi would become National Artist? Unfortunately, I don't have a copy of the cover he made."

Like her father, Ledesma was "approachable." She would tell her daughters how they joked with their dad. "They were sometimes irreverent with him. That was how we were with our mother," Mahilangan says.

But the most admirable trait of her mother, Mahilangan says, was her insatiable appetite for knowledge. "She was always current with the level of conscious." As proof of this, Ledesma finished two master's degrees (Political Science/IR in her late-40s and Art History from the Asian Institute of Arts in her '70s.

Art collection

In the 1940s, Ledesma began collecting the artworks of most of her contemporaries. Cesar Buenaventa, Arturo Magsaysay-Ho, Victor Sagisi, Rostis Jose Gonzales, Carlos Francisco, Galo B. Ocampo, Cesar Legaspi, Adriano Nonato, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Jose Tapia, Eduardo Aviga-Jr, Mario Feliga, Edmundo Farolan and Zoilo Luzcardo.

In her autobiography, "And Life Goes On," Ledesma described them as "a humble lot. Most of them perhaps didn't even dream that they would someday become the masters of Philippine contemporary art."

In the early years, public esteem for artists was low. There was no such thing as an art market, and many academically trained artists ended up in the art department of a newspaper or advertising agency. Francis Coronel quit his job as a newspaper cartoonist because the common impression was that those who became painters were academic failures. Further, it was the common belief that there was no future in painting.

Ledesma had no intention of more than a thousand collection of paintings, sculptures and drawings of various artists from different generations.

A large part of Ledesma's art collection has been donated to the Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, which offers scholarships to deserving students.

Exhibit

On Feb. 3-May 2, the Ayala Museum will mount "A Focus of Philippine Art Selections from the Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Collection." Curated by Ma. "Chi" Roces, the show gives the art patroness' treasured collection. (In 2002, more than a hundred artworks from her collection were exhibited at the Instituto Cervantes.)

Anchored by Dina Isaacson, curator of the Ayala Museum, the exhibition to be exhibited will include some of Ledesma's paintings and one done by her mother.

"The works were done by various artists who figured prominently in 20th-century Philippine art. They also go by generations.

HERNANDO R. Ocampo's "Grass and Red," 1967, oil on canvas

PURITA Kalaw-Ledesma's "Set to Planking," 1979, pen-and-ink-paper

VICENTE Manansala's "Birds," undated, batik

NAPOLEON Abueva's "Batan (Pair)," undated, wood sculpture

There are works by Fabian de la Rosa, Benedicto Cabrera, Magsaysay-Ho, Mauro Malang Santos, Lee Aguinaldo, Legaspi, Arturo Luz, Fernando Zobel, Manansala, Abueva, Igor Fernandez, Antonio Dumlao and a sculpture of Philippine art's daughter, Lyd Fernandez, between walls and a mezzanine

Pure intentions

New air-conditioner technology claims to zap airborne infections—including H1N1 virus

By Joy Ruiz
Correspondent

AEON FROM BEING INVISIBLE TO the human eye, the scary fact about one of the world's biggest health threats is that it is prevalent in the place where we assumed we were at our safest—the indoors.

Doctors and professors who spoke at the third Indoor Environment and Health (IEH) 2010 Seminar hosted by the Asia Center for Indoor Environment & Health (ACIEH) in Singapore curiously brought enough evidence and data to support this alarming and often overlooked reality. Fukuhonna National University professor Satoshi Sakiya revealed how dust mites, fungi and allergens from a pet dog or cat pave the to the incidence of asthma among children in his native Japan. University of Hong Kong professor Yuguo Li explained how infections occur during the seemingly harmless act of conversing. Even Dr. Peng Lim Ooi did not spare his homeland Singapore, famous for its clean and green campaign, for unknowingly harboring unhealthy practices. "If you use the water closet, where do you put your handbag? do you hang it on the wall or put it on the floor?" asked the Ministry of Health deputy director. "Either way, you are exposing your handbag to some contamination. So if you wash your hands after doing your business, decently, you should be washing your handbag, too."

With countless illnesses and deaths resulting from indoor pollutants and airborne infections, the fight to control, and actually eliminate them, is on...and it appears experts are winning the battle. Both Li and Sakiya have studied and seen the value of natural ventilation in reducing airborne diseases. Ooi suggests such basic preventive measures as hand washing, respiratory etiquette, food hygiene and toilet sanitation.

Micro Plasma Ion

But the most impressive answer comes from aromiser spinner Samsung. A technology developed in 2001 by the global electronics giant, Micro Plasma Ion (MPI), involves the release of billions of ions in the air. Once these ions collide with airborne virus, the collision prompts the elimination of three hydrogens from the virus, thus rendering it inactive. Dr. Sang-Hwa Jun, director of the Institute of Influenza Virus, did the honor of testing the MPI technology with perhaps the fastest spreading and deadliest virus today...the H1N1 virus.

The test, conducted from July to September 2009 in a safe and controlled facility certified by the Korean government, saw the use of a small chamber filled with the MPI device. A small dose of the H1N1 virus was sprayed on the equipment and the MPI device was activated; 20 minutes later, five was surprised to discover that over 95-99 percent of the H1N1 virus in the chamber with the MPI device was inactivated.

Subsequent tests using the MPI device on a host of indoor pollutants and airborne diseases yielded equally amazing results: 99.8 percent of the Swine Flu virus was transformed in a study done at Orangham Medical Center; 99.6 percent of the BARD virus was eliminated in a testing at Kitasato Medical Center; tests in Japan and Korea revealed the nearly 100-percent removal of bacteria and fungi; and research conducted in the US and UK confirmed the removal rate of dust mites and cat and dog allergens by the MPI technology. Since then, Samsung has experimented with the MPI system on air-

PROFESSOR Sang-Hwa Jun, MP Yoon Book, professor Yoon Shin Kim and Dr. In Seon Suh

controllers, aircraft, hospitals, classrooms and even chicken broiler houses.

MPI has also been incorporated in Samsung's premium air-conditioner models, which the electronics company launches in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries this month.

Designed to function for at least 10 years, the system promises more than a million ions per cubic centimeter. As test creators should confirm this, but with the encouraging results of the tests, so should the state of pure health.

"Our air-conditioner division has been making great efforts to provide total air solutions," says Yoon Book, Samsung VP for Research & Development for the Digital Air Solutions Business. "Good air quality and environmental health are two of our main concerns. We will continue to develop beneficial products such as MPI, and provide comfortable and safe air."

SAMSUNG air-conditioner with Virus Doctor and Micro Plasma Ion technology

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PLDT

JAIME Zobel, Virgie Ramos and Cory limited-edition painting scarf worn

DINTY Cruz, Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Dr. Lee Cojuangco-Ramirez, Dr. Ann Ayco and Miguel Aberkata

BALLSY Cruz, Vivi Dee and Pinky Markets

SEN. MERYKOY Aquino enjoys a yellow tongue and cheese "dirty ice cream" cone

Sunday sunshine at Cory Swatch launch

MIA DOMEL, Merry Tuason and Madeleine Lim

ANGELA namesakes Cecily Bongyan, Ramona Tuvshinbat and MC Legarda

POPSIE Aquino, Jackie, Pinoh and daughter Andrea Cuenco

THE EVENT WAS HELD LATE AFTERnoon, but it could have been high noon as a blast of yellow sunshine enveloped the Ayala Museum and its surroundings.

The occasion was the launch of the limited-edition Swatch "Cory watch," and was held to celebrate the birthday of the recently departed former president. Zobel not the major event and gave a heartfelt address; with Ballsy Nepomuceno, Aquino and the rest of the Aquino brood (except Kris, who was at work); Congressman Teodoro Locsin who wrote the unifying text of the book where the watches were encased; Lea Salonga (who sang a moving "Bayan Ko"); various Cory fans and supporters; a marching band in blazing yellow; and Virgie Ramos, Swatch doyenne and the brains behind the Cory watch.

It was a hectic, too, normally a quiet day in the bosom of the Ayala business district, but on the day, it was transformed into a noticable fiesta, with colorful buntings and confetti punctuating the sea of yellow.

The watch was the idea of Ramos, who asked Zobel to create a watch that would pay tribute to the country's icon of democracy. Zobel was so gripped by the idea that, before sketching his watch design, he wrote a letter of gratitude to Cory, that letter, in Zobel's handwriting, was blown up and displayed at the event, and is also reproduced in the book that comes with the limited-edition watch.

Only 888 watches carrying Zobel's timepiece design—a yellow mesh on the watch face, with yellow straps containing sketches of Ninoy and Cory Aquino—were made. They sold out within 24 hours. A grave replica of the crescent timepiece was erected before the locale of the museum.

Afterward, Ramos was discreetly asked if she would use design's twenty-six straps. She demurred. Swatch will remain loyal to the Cory watches.

RARITY in sacred the 24-k high Cory Swatch. Virgie Ramos, Rep. Ted Locsin, Jaime Zobel, Ballsy Cruz and Sen. Noynoy Aquino

THE SWATCH Super Maxi—unveiled and currently on display at the Ayala Museum

LEA SALONGA sings "Bayan Ko." Everyone stands up and you could hear a pin drop.

BUTCH Aquino, daughter Jackie Aquino-Cuenco and Maria Hontiveros

TESSA Valdes gets Ballsy Cruz and Jaime Zobel to autograph her book.

JAIME Zobel's letter to Cory, dated Aug. 09, in his penmanship

PAUL Cabral's prize replica of Cory's wedding gown in Ramon Valera

CORY'S son, first grandson Jiggy

CONGRESSMAN Ted Locsin

CESAR Sarino, Ellen Cruz, Adolf de Leon, Irene Dominguez and Ebbot Cruz

HYRMA Fernandez, Rose and Marivic Amusategui and Jane Hernandez of Ayala

MINDY Aquino scholar and new Greenmark marketing director Francis Flores

ALBERT Martinez, daughter Alissa and Lizel Martinez

How I maintain my happy hormones

"I THINK YOUR PROJECT IS MAKING you sick..." Wisdom doesn't always come from someone older. In this case, it was my 10-year-old daughter, reminding me to slow down.

I'm working on a book and on my graduate thesis right now—necessary work but emotionally exhausting. Some days, I get totally lost and immersed in it that I forget to take time to rest for myself. Last month, I felt overstimulated by all of work. I couldn't explain why I felt so restless and tired. A good friend reminded me that the topic wasn't exactly all fun and games. In fact, it's serious to the core and not that customarily makes me revisit one of the most difficult periods of my life. I should try to take my daughter's words to heart. Self-care is the order of the day from here on.

"Do something care for yourself each day," my mentor once told me at a time in my life when I was particularly frazzled. I keep forgetting that whenever I get lost in the flurry of deadlines and assorted duties. The last week was so painfully tough that I felt I no longer had the energy to attend to good-mirror's wedding last Sunday. I'm so glad I went. After a particularly draining week, I found myself refreshed in the middle of the polo field as I watched the young couple, wrapped in love, make their wedding vows. There, under a tent replete of wide-open blue skies and an endless swath of green, I felt my inner spring season renew. The happy hormones had returned.

Self-care strategies

Why do we wait until we're frazzled to take good care of ourselves? I observe self-care practices in theory more than in fact sometimes I forget to pay attention to mine. I suppose I am not human. To help myself, I listed my top self-care strategies and planned them to a well-being. I could use them each morning and at night before I go to bed. You can make up your own, but here they are:

1. **Get enough sleep.** For some, eight hours is a small, reliable for others, six will do. Depending on the day's schedule, I realize I can hardly function if I don't get my 6-8 hours sleep. I become cranky and lost of a mother when I don't sleep well. However, there are days when you can't help it, when you're home is too mixed with thoughts of work, the kids, the house, etc. When that happens, I find that having a cup of warm lavender tea works wonders.

2. **Exercise regularly.** Last week, I broke routine, and so it was no wonder that I was frustrated. Regular exercise keeps those endorphins up and running. No matter how busy you are, always make some time for it. Get up an extra hour early or walk around the block after dinner. Something about sweat and detoxifying yourself from all the "poisons" of daily living helps keep you glowing and keeps you sane.

3. **That's what friends are for.** Find a friend or two who will listen and vent or decide whenever your nerves are shot or you feel blue. Ideally, it should be someone whose opinions you respect, who won't be a wet blanket, someone who will tell it like it is, and someone who can take care of you when you are having a bad hair day. In other words, be that kind of friend, too. Never underestimate the value of social support, of having someone to pour your heart and mind to.

4. **Pamper yourself.** Soak in the tub. Get a massage. Go to the salon. Buy yourself something nice. Have a meal you won't forget. Indulge in your favorite dessert. Taking care of the external self works wonders on the internal self as well.

5. **Processing is key.** There is always a reason why you are troubled or blue. Stop a while and try to figure out where it's coming from. Are you a introvert or pleaser and unable to down. Breathe deeply as you do this. Listen to some calming music. Stay in a quiet, comfortable room. Most often than not, you will get your "Aha!" moment and it will come to you. Whatever it is, be ready to face it, address it, act on it, and move on.

6. **Pray and meditate.** This always works wonders but it is also something we often forget to do. Prayer must always be one's first course and not the resort of last resort. I forgot who said, "The more I find myself on my knees, the more I have to get down on my knees." Both guidance at the beginning and end of each day. He knows your day already. It's all been laid out for you. Ask Him for the courage and the wisdom to plough through whatever will be thrown your way over the next 24 hours.

To keep yourself sane on the journey, take good care of yourself. After all, you cannot give what you do not have.

Here's to a calmer, more joyful week ahead!

E-mail the author at carby.habon@gmail.com.

ROOTS AND WINGS

Carby Habon-Caballa

Michelle Yeoh co-designs LV store in Singapore

MALAYSIAN SUPERSTAR Michelle Yeoh entered the Louis Vuitton boutique at Takashimaya Ngee Ann City in Singapore as if she were in her own home.

She gushed about the fresh flowers, scented candles, and handpicked books on couture, gardening and travel. We sat at a room called the *Salon d'accueil* (pictured after the couture dressing rooms of yore), one of her favorite spots.

"I like to come here with my girlfriends and take off my shoes...shut, my nose bubbly and, of course, fit some clothes or check out the latest accessories. This is my dream home. If my actual home looked like this I would be happy!" she said.

Yeoh, whose films include "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," "Memoirs of a Geisha" and the James Bond flick "Tomorrow Never Dies," is one of a handful of ambassadors who were given the privilege to co-design a Louis Vuitton store.

The partnership started one night in Paris, when Louis Vuitton chair and CEO Yves Carcelle and Yeoh were having dinner with their partners. Carcelle approached her with the offer, and she readily accepted. The next day Yeoh was in Vuitton headquarters to meet with the store's head team.

"I can't take all the credit," she said. "Vuitton's team is far too good! They were able to interpret my style, and I am more than pleased with the outcome!"

Personal touch

The upscale store is divided into two levels. The first level is for men, watches and jewelry, while the second level is the "women's universe." The centerpiece of the latter is definitely the nine-meter-high metal ribbon chandelier hanging on top of the spiral staircase.

TNT TRENDS & TRENDINGS

Antoni Sure Diego

'This is my dream home. If my actual home looked like this I would be happy!'

LV HONOLULU chandelier in maroon glass

Why the collaboration with celebrities?

Explained Carcelle, "We have always done it. From Stephen Sprouse to Murakami designing our bags and accessories, to Keith Richards and Sean Connery. We feel that taking celebrities to design a store is no different. What it does is give the store a personal touch, a unique personality and connotation/aerials."

The new store is more contemporary and less intimidating. The palette is warm, with touches of amber and laurel yellow. The floors are in wood, with plush carpeting and leather sofas accented with chrome pillows. The walls hold photographs from the visit Vuitton artistes—fashion, travel and landscape pictures.

LOVLIEST Yeh, Jean-Baptiste Dubois, Yeoh, Carcelle, Kenji Ikeki and Jean-Christophe Tortois

MODELS wearing the Cruise 2010 collection

LV CHAIR and CEO Yves Carcelle, Yeoh and the author

MICHELLE Yeoh and LV Malletier team

I haven't been to Singapore in quite a while, what is immediately apparent is that the city now exudes a sense of modern sophistication. It's up to longer be called "Singa-boer."

The numerous international events, concerts, the business development as well as the F1—they're all proof that the government is serious about the city-state's proper place in the world. For the Louis Vuitton opening, over 400 of Singapore's top personalities and socialites were invited.

I bumped into Filipinos Elise Carrasco and Noelle Go, editors of Inside and Harper's Bazaar, respectively. Also snapped were singer John Manapsal, who is making a name for himself there. Model/TV host Francis Valeriz was there with her sister and mother, because she won the ticket organized by Louis Vuitton.

I was there with Nina Picazo, the 3-year-to-be married dynamic marketing head of Louis Vuitton Philippines. I also spent time with top hostess Kathy de Guzman and one of my closest and dearest friends, Claudia Bernardez.

I managed to make some small talk with Carcelle, as we have a common friend in Roseanne de Pamplona. He mentioned that their kids are good friends at school and her kids are regularly at his home. He even managed to squeeze in some Filipino words.

Of course, what's the store without the merchandise? Louis Vuitton, renowned for its luxury goods, has upped the ante in terms of the finest materials, dazzling trademarks, gem scenes for its jewelry.

While the world recovers from an economic slump, Vuitton has never shied away from the opportunities open to it; it did not close any stores in 2009.

This year, it is set to open more stores in the Middle East, South America and Russia. In Singapore, it is doubling yet another store in location. The unique feature will be a glass tunnel and an accessories room.

Meanwhile, the new Takashimaya Ngee Ann City shop is only a few minutes away from Ion Luxuries mall), which also has an LV store. If that's not a shopper's nirvana, I don't know what is.

Should she continue to help her dad with his financial woes?

DEAR EMILY,

I am troubled daughter abroad. My dad who is a widower is under a lot of stress from me. He can't handle money and is full of debts and is even being sued for honoring a check of a decade ago. His situation is poor and cold.

On top of that he is sick and needs to buy a lot of expensive maintenance medicine. He is always saddled by the people who take care of him. My problem is I am not well-off myself. I work hard to pay for my family's needs and the schooling and therapy of my special child, who is 6 years old.

How far does one go to honor one's parent? Are we or are we not helping by sending provisions to them? Are we in a position to give them bonuses or just leave it to the Lord to forgive him? Parents, must we think that they have the right to limit children's earnings and that they can demand to be taken care of. They even resort to emotional blackmail.

TROUBLED DAUGHTER

If you had anything to do with your father's debts—like co-signature bills or phone lists or wedding expenses...then you have the responsibility to settle them, but if he insisted those for something other than life or death issues in the family, he has to own up to them, no matter his circumstances now. A debt is a debt, a debt, sir, has to be forgiven by the debtors themselves.

Help him as much as possible without breaking your back or diminishing your spirit doing it. But letting anxious stress for support ing him all these years not healthy.

Enrich your perspectives by looking at it not as a burden, but as a gift to him. Consider that he may not be around here for long. Children forget that when they were growing up, parents scrounged around short of begging, stealing or borrowing to put food on the table and pay for their education.

If he weren't broke now, he might even be the one helping you out. And think beyond his misdeeds to those around him. Try to call. He is in pain. He is broke. His world, for all you know, is a mass of frustration, and resting it the only way he knows how.

It certainly will be difficult to give away the little you have, but do it for your kids' sake. Kids are an impressionable lot. How you care for your parents—leaving your kindness and filial devotion to them, however hard-up you are—will be embedded in their consciousness. They will do the same to you, when your time comes.

Remember the saying, "what goes around comes around."

E-mail: emily@inquirer.com.ph. Subject: Lifestyle.

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Mercado

Ikebana in Cebu holds exhibit to celebrate its ruby anniversary

IN THE MID-1960S, THE MACTAN AIR Base of the Philippine Air Force played host to a detachment from the US Air Force. Officers and airmen had short stints and so, every time one of them brought their wives to Cebu, One of them did and she made all the difference.

Muriel Kortmeyer was an Indonesia enthusiast and barely able been to Japan when her husband was assigned there. She was well versed enough and held a certificate that allowed her to teach the Japanese art of flower arranging. Ikeba Ikebanistas and other prominent Cebu ladies were among her first pupils.

There is more than just arranging flowers to Ikebana, as the ladies discovered. There is a good dose of philosophy behind it, having to do with moods expressed and how they are interpreted by a knowing eye. Also, and quite important, is Ikebana's concern with the relationship between man, nature and God.

Cebu became living value it is, many a young or not has said that Ikebana's success has been to do with the fleshy main that characterizes Cebuanos whatever their social status. Wish to Ikebe, you can do so much, Ikebana-wise. Leaves, twigs, wild flowers, whatever you have in a garden, however small can be turned into an arrangement of artistic intensity.

When Cebu was general manager of her family's Montebello Villa Hotel, she taught many of the staff Ikebana. Gwen Montebello's aunt and sprawling garden they provided the blooms that gave color to table centers, front desk and every other office of the hotel.

Going back to Muriel, she encouraged her students to group themselves into an Ikebana chapter and obtain recognition from the International headquarters in Tokyo. The suggestion was received with enthusiasm.

In 1969 with the end of the Vietnam war, the Americans left Subic naval Station in Mactan were closed, and the Kortmeyer couple left. But Muriel kept the communications line open and followed up the approval of the Cebu chapter of Ikebana International. It came in 1970.

The first president was Remedios Avila Cabahanes. Then the perennial president of the Cebu Garden Club. How do I know all these things? I have been chronicling Cebu society doings since 1990 (I was 111) and Ikebana was very much a part of the social scene.

It still is, and never has the group been more active and stronger. They have formed a club within a club, the highly prestigious Ikenobo Society of Cebu. Ikenobo masters have for centuries required the secrets of classic Ikebana, and they have other icons to Cebu for courses and demos.

To explain Ikenobo, we'd have to write a session or at least an essay article to not even scratch the surface. The session on hand has to do with the 45th anniversary of the Cebu Chapter of Ikebana International in 2014, discussed during a meriendo lunch of by Cebu at her home.

Cebu brought on clippings from newsletters, and she had asked her Ikebana comrades to do likewise. Clippings were necessary as remember what road can be nostalgic and hilarious as well as inspiring. But a while they have lost touch with Muriel but as this morning it was separated she is fine, living in sunny Florida.

Present on this occasion were Ikebana Cebu current president Maggie Ig, president-elect Carmen Go, Norma Sanchez, Cotta Khalsa, Becky Peralta, Pauline Desdoger, Helen Yap, Betty Gy and Bebe Alcoseba, praised for the slim figure she keeps.

To celebrate a ruby year, Ikebana is Cebu will hold a grand exhibit which will open on March 5, 4 p.m., at the atrium of SM City Cebu. The Consul of Japan Toshio Okazina will be invited to be the guest of honor. The exhibit will be open to the public on March 6-7 during SM mall hours.

The Cebu Ikebana Ladies could participate in the hosts general exhibition of Ikebana to be held in Manila come September. Delegates from all over the world come to this event, and Carmen Go who has suggested the Cebu chapter do an entertainment number. It will be either a fruity still-life or

YVRGE and Ray Reyes (center) with daughters Sheila and Leslie Anne

a stately waltz to Maria Clara dresses.

Birthday celebrations

Giant crabs, rock lobsters and an array of luscious fish and seafood are featured in the Seafood Market Buffet Friday and Saturday nights at the Cebu City Marriott Hotel. They are displayed fresh, and you may pick the live ones to be prepared them any which way you want. A meal at P999 per person.

Ray and Virgie Reyes, with daughters Sheila and Leslie Anne, chose one such night to celebrate Virgie's birthday. Well-wishers included Rafaelito Pelaez, Bebot and Rosendo Go, Myra Estrandero, Vilma Ocampo and Carmela Bautista-Gonzalez-Belo Lucaida. From the Marriott's Garden Cafe the group moved to the hotel's Palm lounge at the lobby to listen to piano music.

Next birthday was that of Bubbly Gat. She and Ricardo opted for a small gathering at the home of their children Wynn and Genevieve Go in Beverly Hills. Tweek Ty-tiao prepared the buffet spread with excellent Japanese cuisine. Cebu ladies, though, dominated the catering station and were duly appreciated.

A couple of days later the same group had dinner Cebu ladies at the regular night's buffet of Vons, the Filipino restaurant with Josef del Prado at its helm. It was Gemma Bonifacio's Vons celebrating her birthday. She had planned it small, but there was a horde of Vons cousins to make merry and wish her many happy returns of the days. Same time, next year?

RUSH TO SM CITY NORTH EDSA TODAY!

It's a Red-Tag weekend guys! Get the coolest and best finds for a lower price now at SM City North Edsa. Lavish in a relaxing ambience for shopping and dining, great for family and friends alike. Come together for a spectacular mall experience - at a reasonable price.

Satisfy your foodie cravings as you go shopping like crazy. Take that sumptuous break and choose from hundreds of top restaurants and favorite fast food chains that the whole family will surely enjoy.

There's always a gastronomical feast waiting for you, at any corner of SM City North Edsa!

Go on a fashion frenzy binge! Work up your shopaholic side! At SM City North Edsa, there's always something for everybody - all unbelievably low, low prices.

Lure your sale-hungry barkada to hundreds of fashion boutiques, shoe stores, book shops and appliance outlets for those fabulous bargain finds. Don't miss the greatest sale destination at this side of town!

SM city north edsa

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MALL HOURS:
10AM TO 11PM

EXCEPT ON JAN 31
10AM TO 10PM

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, the woman behind RP visual arts /C1

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Why not a 'Birkin check' on politicians' wives?

SINCE THE LIFESTYLE CHECK ON government officials and politicians is overdrive, we propose a better gauge of how clean or corrupt a politico's lifestyle is. Why not a Birkin check?

Count the number of Birkin bags a politician's wife has.

Say, has? this cookie monster when we heard that a controversial politician's wife has, as of last count, 33 Birkins.

Birkin is the luxury bag—make that number of all luxury bags—in the Hermes brand, coveted not only for its price and craftsmanship (handmade leather, with only one person making one bag from start to finish) but also because would-be wearers are put on the wait list for years (delayed gratification). Even "desk-fit/style" books have glorified it (see "Bringing Home the Birkin").

On retail, it costs about P500,000 up (the top-of-the-line Croton is P1.3 million).

Now, 15 times P500,000 (at least)—do the math.

Since Hermes opened its first retail outlet store in the Philippines last December, customers have been able to know the bag's correct price. Pre-Hermes opening, independent sellers would sell it double its retail price—because their buyers were women who just had to "have it now."

But with a legit Hermes store around, these independent hawkers must be losing some business, or are they?

Since Hermes is selling a very limited number—and it chooses whom to sell to...it's safe to assume that these politicians' wives (or girlfriends and other women) got theirs on the "black market," and thus a lot more expensive.

(Eleanor Cuenca doesn't fit the mold).

4MINUTE LIVE IN MANILA!

The Philippine Promo Tour

Catch **Ji Hyun, Ga Yoon, Ji Yoon, Hyun A, So Hyun**, collectively known as 4Minute make their way to Manila on Feb. 4 – 6 for a series of mall shows and autograph signing sessions! Details are as follows:

Feb. 5- SM Mall of Asia Main Atrium 6PM

Feb. 6- SM Megamall Event Center 3PM

Feb. 7- SM North EDSA Annex Event Center 5PM

4Minute's Philippine promo tour is presented to you by Talk N' Text Tipid Sulit Together and 904 Supermalls! Media partners include MYX Your Choice Your Music, Sandwave 101.9 Star Ka Pa, 93.9 FM and ABS-CBN. Official residence of 4Minute in Manila, EDSA Shangri-la Hotel. To get 4Minute's music on your Talk N' Text mobile phones, simply TEXT 4MINUTE to 216. To become a member of the official fan club of 4minute, just register to www.4minute.ph.

4Minute and Fve Mnick is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by MCA Music Inc.

THE VIEW JUST GOT

Food, fun and Fashion at SM City Fairview Annex 2

We've now got a mall-exciting new shopping up north with the opening of SM City Fairview Annex 2. Here's a guide to our favorite fashion stores, fine dining restaurants, and superb services.

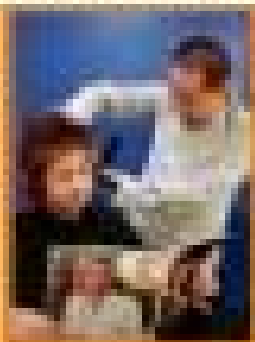
Fashions Just Got Better

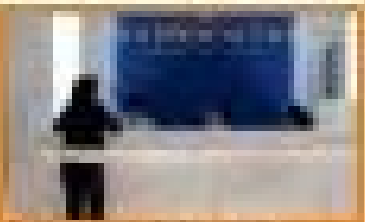
Forever and Again

Hands down made for comfort

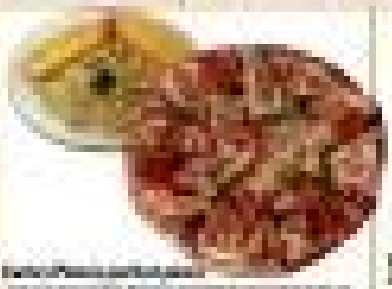
Mix N Match

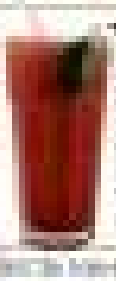
Wellness and Beauty Just Got Better



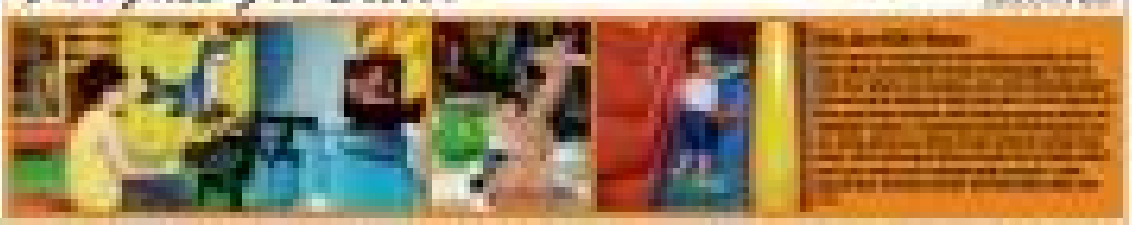


Eating Out Just Got Better





Fun Just Got Better



Why not a 'Birkin check' on politicians' wives?

From page D1

She's independently wealthy and has been running her hoop since she was in her teens.)

All that in an impoverished country where a single bag could mean food and shelter for a poor family in Uru. It saved really to belabor that point.

Politicians' wives who are third- hand- hands' ZLgerton wealthy to splurge on a bag are today's Hosni Mubarak's. Either hostile to the guillotine has gone out of style.

Bags and breast pairs

Still on bags, a long, it turns out, impacts and sadly your budget on wallet. It can also take its toll on—believe it or not—your breast.

Today's heavy bags have an effect on a woman's neck or shoulder joints, and the pain, doctors say, gets "extended" to the chest or breast, so that sometimes a woman suffers one's breasts.

Midnight shopping

There's midnight sale and there's midnight shopping. We're not talking of malls, however, but of a top politician scouring the end of his menu. What does he do? He snaps up luxurious properties at night, including a penthouse on a high-end address on San Francisco.

Feel-good techno

The big buzz this week was the launch of the iPad. Apple's much-rumored tablet device that's said to be a bridge between a smartphone and a netbook.

No matter its destination, the long wait and much hoopla over the iPad is testament to just how technology has changed the way we live our day-to-day lives. These tiny mobile devices have become the great equalizer of modern life: You don't need to be a techie or a CEO to find use for these gizmos.

DIM SUM dishes streaming out of the kitchen to the bar

PHILIP Rodriguez at his dim sum bar

a lot to love at
Robinsons
Department Store
www.robinsonsdepartmentstore.com.ph

Only a Luddite would claim otherwise, but mobile technology has indeed made modern life easier and more productive.

With smartphones, the Internet can now be accessed on the go, so you're never really far away from your office desk even when you're on the road or halfway across the globe.

Notice, for instance, how MacTan Exchange for those people who prefer to see their corporate e-mail like Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes, and Nokia Messaging for web-based e-mail on your mobile device (think Yahoo or Gmail). For business e-mail users, there's Ovi Mail. These offerings are easy and quick to install and are also compatible with a whole range of Nokia mobile phones.

Happy Orange Valentine

The Peninsula Manila has a cool idea—the Peninsula Orange Valentine.

The couple, the instead they with mi- their hotel room, will be enveloped in the luxurious world of Hermes orange. They can nibble on chocolate-dipped mangoes, apricots and oranges while sipping Peninsula Champagne before dressing from an array of Hermes frill and body products.

The next morning, they will be driven in a Mercedes-Benz limousine to the Hermes boutique at Greenbelt 2 for private viewing and shopping for fashion, fine leather, fragrance and fragrances. A Peninsula Continental breakfast will be served by a butler at the Hermes boutique. (The promo ends Feb. 14.)

Now this is one Valentine celebration where the man doesn't really come prepared.

Mad 'cougar'

There's no greater wrath than a cougar's when just split from her young hunk, to replenish a cliche. This "cougar" (a woman coupling with a much younger man—if you haven't heard of the term yet), who's just been dumped by her good-looking squeeze, is getting venom on her Facebook, and venting the goodies she has given him. Some Valentine spirit.

Pampanga is hot, hot

It's 3 a.m., do you know where your kids are?

If you're from Pampanga, chances are they're at Mansion.

The club, which opened last Nov. 21, is the brainchild of Tim Ong, Divine Lee and Rhett Ford Bose' night life tip. Tim says, "We opened Mansion at Encore to prove that nightlife is not limited to Metro Manila. A club brings together a community and makes everyone interact with one another. Pampanga is No. 1 in entertaining and clubbing. Now it is also top in clubbing and nightlife with Mansion."

The club has been off to a good start. It's especially packed on the weekends, when the parties last practically all night.

In a touch of the club's opening, "rules of clothing and comedies in the city have gone up," says Tim.

Expectations aren't the only ones enjoying Mansion. People from Manila have been going all the way to Angeles, Ave, to escape from the city and to party in a new scene.

Tim and Divine intend to open more clubs in other provinces. "We don't want nightlife to just be limited in Manila," they say.

Dim sum bar

Cebu's foremost designer Philip Rodriguez has a good concept that's gaining a good clientele in Cebu—a dim sum bar. Rodriguez and his partners opened Tim Sin Tee Dim sum and Tin Ha at Ayala Center, where one can choose from an array of dim sum dishes parading around the bar, like in some Cantonese joints. It's like the casino bars in New York.

The menu is Fusion Chinese. The interior, designed by Rodriguez himself is modern, Jap Oriental—dominated by chocolate-brown and gold that stands out in minimal white. Minimalist chairs, sleek but not-too-sleek not-too-plastic. This is one resto where the owner's high fashion connections with the cups for extreme interest. Now.

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Why not a 'Birkin' check on politician's wives? /D1

Sunday LIFESTYLE

What's enough to shake up Villar

SEN. PANNY Villar and wife Cynthia, before their downsides in their high-rise

IT SEEMS WE HAVE FOUND the formula to rile the normally cool, inclusive, if placid, Sen. Manny Villar.

And it starts with letter C (and we don't mean C-5).

"Camille is so pain[illegible]" we exclaimed over dinner two Mondays ago, after Camille just bid the dinner table goodbye and gave her dad a buzz on the cheeks preceded by a soft whisper into his ear.

"Ha! Ha, so..." Villar piped up in protest, if not denial, prompting a dinner guest to acknowledge—"Brrrrr, tell him that! He's a father."

And Camille is his only daughter, the youngest who, to this day, we still can't spot-score (in a manner of speaking) on.

Just right after Camille left, Villar answered, or actually an ear on the table in particular—"Napakot na ulet kayo di mabal na mabal na 'yan." This coming from a man who, to public, rarely admits to any emotion.

And turning 25, Camille is brunette—negative worry-na-bread, in fact...still, stylish yet simple, more important, a professional with a work ethic fraud of corporate communications dear of Villar's real estate and property development companies).

Most important, she is a very dutiful daughter, who hasn't brought problems, not even unforeseeables, to her folks. So Dr. Jar's wife Cynthia once told us, "Napakalaki ng tulong [sic]."

All these years, Camille has stuck to a very down-to-earth, and low-key when she has a chosen friend that's a favorite of style glossies and moves in stylista circles, we notice she's no slave to brands, like doesn't brandish "it" bags, even if she can afford them.

That night, she left the dinner early to attend a late-night function on behalf of her dad.

Villar has two other children—the very low-key Paolo whereas Cynthia describes as "our social" (he does his own "polling" for his dad in the media. The stuff of books indicates his reparative, introvert), and the preliminary blurb tells, obviously, is the dad's other ego in politics.

The Villars' next confirmation: ambition is blatant been a

WHAT'S SO

Arts and music—the best stress-busters

WE SLINK AND JAMJAM IS GONE. This new techno decade seems to be moving at hyperspeed, as we have hardly savored the pleasures of cool January nights when the month is suddenly over.

What better way to treat the new decade of the here than with a visit from a cool-

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

ARTS 02

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BRIGHT Senator Aquino Cultural Council Philippine Chairman, presenting some awards to his classmates at Feb. 6

ASIAN Cultural Council directors Ruth Isabel Wilson, Malu Gordon, Karen Davila and Ching Cruz present a rice work by Betty Westendorp

WORLD of Feng Shui owners Marites and Nick Allen and Sea Princess at Feng Shui Forecast Forum

VISITING to other Dr. Andrew Priests with cardiologists Sandy Romualdez and Ria Prieto

Arts and music—the best stress-busters

Pretenyago B1

adopted? In my case, my brother Andrew flew in from the US to make a "house call."

Actually, my multi-awarded doctor brother was here to give the keynote speech at the 30th National Annual Convention on Preventive Cardiology. Andrew was invited by Dr. Adolfo Bellosillo, president of the sponsoring Foundation for Lay Education on Heart Diseases, whose Board of Trustees includes such luminaries as chairman Jun Concepcion, Imelda Cojuangco, Johnny Litton, Andy Tantoco, Nelia Bengzon, Dr. Soobert Uy, my brother Manny Pelaez and Foreign Secretary Dr. Alberto Encinas.

It's always a pleasure to listen in a sibling make a keynote speech, even though I was lost in the medical translation. As near as I could tell, Andrew talked about the advancement of cures for heart disease. His lecture time was easy enough to get—an owner of preventive cell lending a jumpsuit of cures.

I love it when speakers say it in plain English. Dr. Andrew explained how a healthy lifestyle with moderate consumption of alcohol is the key to a stronger heart, among the usual hassles of heart disease, like stress, smoking and overeating, stress combinations to weakening the aging heart.

So this February, we should be focused on stress busters. One way is to live our quiet lives more in chorus. I had the chance to attend the informative talk by celebrated Kalinhan Yehudo Berg, and I was intrigued by our personal capacity to change ourselves and have a positive impact on the world around us.

Some of us wish we could be better parents, have stronger friendships, or find our soul mate. Others yearn for a bigger house, a more fulfilling job, or relief from financial burdens and debts. No matter who we are, where we live, or what we have, there is almost always something to say it's like we want to change. And—big surprise—we have the power!

Valentine concerts

The best stress-buster of all, he says, is music. And there are so many Valentine's Day concerts from this week.

For jazz enthusiasts, there is one prominent name—David Benoit. This jazz maestro has captured our hearts over the decades with hits like "Boy to You" and "Land of the Loving." Our very own Lea Salonga has her own version of the former in one of her albums.

David Benoit will perform at the PICC Plenary Hall on Feb. 11 in a special, one-night only, pre-Valentine's concert. The concert is produced by 186.7 Dream FM, Antiroal Productions and Blinding Inc. Ticket tickets, call Ticketflix at 9115555, Ticketworld at 8913049, or Smile Odyssey at 9207621. Or even via the Dream Hotline at 8934676.

Two days all to the Benoit show, on Feb. 13, the talented ladies collectively known as La Diva perform in their first Valentine concert, "Intimately La Diva," at One Esplanade, Mall of Asia Complex. For tickets, call Sunday Side Up Productions at 7367521.

KAMBAL Ayala Susan Cruz, Cory Quirino, Mikki Lopez and Sea Princess with Kabbalist Yehuda Berg

DOLLY Perey poses with National Artist Napoleon Abueva, whose sculptural wood bench was used as backplate for the cover of "Your Garden, Your Eden."

The La Diva showcases all had three-time Pop Superstar Annabel Hirsh was grand champion in 2001 and Marinella Garcia in 2006, while Ateville Santos was runner-up in the intervening year. Mentored and trained by Ernesto Tan, directed by Louie Ignacio and styled by Pepsi Herrera, "Intimately La Diva" promises to be a mind-blowing musical experience.

Art events

If music is not your ideal stress-buster, then consider an art show to soothe your heart. The Asian Cultural Council Art Auction is on Feb. 6, 4 p.m., at the Manila Art Gallery. ACC-Philippine Representative Malou Gordon-Cuny. This year, among the rare works offered are those by renowned artists Arturo Luz, Ben Cab, Boy Westendorp, Luz Librodo, Ben Arabejo, Elmer Borlongan, Jun Gatus, Wire Watson and others. Previews for the artworks start on Feb. 1 at the Hall next door. Log on to www.asiaculturalcouncil.org.

The ACC is composed of an art-loving group, including my good friends Raja Laurel, Jun-jun Suñico and Malu Gordon. Others in the council are Ernest Escalante, Isabel Wilson, Maribel Ongpin, Karen Davila, Dr. Joven Cuanang, Ching Cruz and Lizzie Lorenzo. The group raises funds to give outstanding young artists the chance to learn from and be exposed to other artists in Asia and the United States.

Past grantees include Lawrence Kasiling and Jose Maninda, who both became national artists; the music award film scorer Vilma Aguilos; book lover, lawyer to Manila's art crowd; and Alice Reyes, founder of Indio Philippines. The ACC has supported over 100 Asian and American artist scholars since its inception.

Art is an ideal stress buster for me, as the range of what is artistic is so vast. I recently attended the book launch of "Your Garden, Your Eden," which is actually author Dolly Perez's sequel to "Home Haven Heaven." Landscape architect Dolly shows us all how to find art in our own homes and gardens through her books.

"Your Garden, Your Eden" features 30 works by members of the Philippine Association of Landscape architects. The launch was attended by National Artist Napoleon Abueva, whose sculptural wooden bench graces the book's cover. That's as valid an inspirational feature as any I can think of.

Feb. 14 is the peak of heart month, as it is both Valentine's Day and the Chinese New Year. The Year of the Tiger will be a year of drive, intensity, change and travel. It won't be a deliberate months, as unfortunately it is usually a year of world conflicts and disasters. It will also be a year of far-reaching changes, new inventions and technological advances.

For all of the Chinese horoscope signs,

LA DIVA Lizzette Santos, Jenalyn Perez and Marinella Garcia

AMONG the guests of the lunch were Jackie Bernardo Parks (second from left), Mayor Mel Mathay and Vilma Rukes, together with Dolly's husband Spanky (second from right).

TWO of the landscape architects featured in the book are Mary Ann Espino and Zara Gallegos (extreme right), posing with Architect Jose Mansna and wife.

DODO Nimal Jackie Peyre and Miss Jewelry owner Barbi Cruz

DOLLY presents a copy of the book to Divina Abrenica, president of the Philippine Association of Architects (PALA), whose gardens are also featured in the book.

KEYNOTE speaker Dr. Andrew Prieto (center), Dr. Baby Manikath and Jun Concepcion at the Preventive Cardiology Convention

this year is one to be active—seizing opportunities and making the most of one's passion and even individual talents. Everything happens quickly and dramatically in a Tiger year—think and you could miss an important chance of a lifetime!

E-mail the author at sugarbowl@inquirer.com.ph.

DR. ADOLFO Bellosillo, president, Foundation for Lay Education in Heart Disease

DAVID Benoit live in Manila on Feb. 11

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD By Frank A. Longo

YO-YO EFFECT

answer on page C2

IN THE LIVING room is a photo of Villar with young Camille, taken in the '70s.

CAMILLE (center) with guests Louie Cruz and Vicky Agustin

MICHAEL Cacoy sculpture at Silverbelle

We Buy DIAMONDS

What's enough to shake up Villar

Pretenga 81

very clear trophies of the sons, even if it was Cynthia who—those she reluctantly framed in terms design of Ivy and Cynthia Mendez.

Like his father, Mark is a stalwart Philippine art collector, a very impressive one. The hallway leading to their wing of the family residence shows a refined taste, from Orlando, Alvarez to Gloria Rosetes. His bedroom has the young artists' hip experience in contemporary Philippine art.

The main foyer and the living room combine the art preferences of fathers and son—a 1938 Amorsolo of a woman bathing in the river, which the senator bought when he was still a struggling entrepreneur, for a song, so to speak, at that time; a 1953 Manansala; a 1977 Jill Ocampo and a 1975 Jill Ocampo at the entrance; an Ocde Dimasin mother and child, Idaho; a rare Anita Magsaysay-Ho scenery.

There are also small framed sketches by Botero, Picasso, Rembrandt...the children's gifts to their parents on various family milestones.

All of the priceless art has a curious companion in the foyer—a lavish gleaming gold table fixture that involves, the glitter produced by its crystal lights enough to grab your eye. It's a gift from Don Emilio Yap.

On top of the grand piano is a gold sculpture the couple commissioned—fisherfolk doing early morning reading. The scene holds special meaning to them—Villar was selling in the palengke at seven years old.

Today, the senator not only has the good life, obviously, but also knows the finer life—from art to music. His iPods have at least 20,000 songs.

Fine life and hard work. The senator and Cynthia are used to having 16-hour days—a throwback to their years as a young couple starting a gravel and sand business.

They've been married 35 years. The secret of the married longevity? Cynthia replies with deadpan humor—"You just keep quiet."

TSS

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Caltrate Plus

UST holds postgraduate course on bioethics

The University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (UST-FMS) Department of Bioethics and the University of Santo Tomas Hospital Bioethics Committee will hold its 11th Postgraduate Course in Bioethics on Feb. 4-6 at the UST-FMS Continuing Medical Education Auditorium. Advanced registration is now being accepted by the Department of Bioethics. For reservations, write to Department of Bioethics, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila. Call Chona at 4061611 local 8253; fax 731-3126; e-mail ustbioethics@yahoo.com.

CamaManila

Power Plant Mall, Bonifacio and Rizaleanas, in cooperation with School of Fashion and the Arts (SoFA), present CamaManila 2010 on Feb. 10-12, the four-day affair celebrating Brazilian culture will be kicked off by free wor-kilhops on the Brazilian arts of capoeira, percussion and samba, complemented by guest masters from Brazil as well as celebrated local artistes. A capoeira de Guadeval show be held on Feb. 12 to cap off the workshops. SoFA will hold Brazilian Fashion Week on Feb. 5-14.

Nihongo fiesta

On Feb. 27, the Japan Foundation, Manila (JFM) and Old Makati Area will hold the 2010 Nihongo Fiesta. The annual festival, which promotes international cultural and arts exchange between Japan and the Philippines, will include Nihongo speech contest, Japanese and Filipino Bridal Fashion Exhibit and Contest, and J-Rock Concert. The Japanese and Filipino Street Fashion Exhibit and Contest will on Feb. 22-28 in the Makati Area of MOA. The J-Rock Concert features Nothing, Japanese punk-pop-rock band Shonen Knife and Pedicab in a one-night live concert at MOA's San Miguel by the Bay will be held at 7:30-9:30 p.m. Call 811 6139; e-mail@jfmo.org.ph

Baby Company Launches Star Baby 2010

Look proof, easy to grasp Pigeon Mighty Training Cup

This Pigeon cutlery set's non-slip plastic and hand will make feeding time fun and fuss free

Baby 1st multi-purpose changing table, bathtub and dresser

Keep baby comfortable with ProKids diapers

Baby Company, the Baby Specialist, launches its Star Baby 2010 search with a fun filled day for moms, dads, and babies at the Event Center, Food Court of the SM City North EDSA Main Mall today at 2:00 PM.

Babies up to 18 months are invited to join, get a chance to shine as a Star Baby, and win exciting prizes. An accumulated P5,000 minimum purchase at Baby Company outlets at the SM Department Store entitles one to register and join the contest. Purchases must include at least P500 worth of any combination of ProKids and Pigeon items, and registrants must be holders of SM Advantage, Prestige, or BDO Rewards cards.

Star Baby participants will be judged on their healthy looks, skin complexion, happy disposition, and overall appearance. Three quarterly winners will be selected from the Metro Manila, Luzon, and Vismin areas, and each will be entitled to P20,000 worth of SM Gift Certificates; P5,000 worth of Pigeon items; P5,000 worth of ProKids products; and a free one year subscription from Baby Magazine. They will also have a chance to be an image model of Baby Company.

Make your baby shine in Baby Company's Star Baby 2010 search. Visit Baby Company outlets at the SM Department Store or their website at www.babycompany.com.ph.

AS CUTE as Siberia as one could get without wearing fur hats

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Surviving snow—'All things must pass and all things shall return'

By Margie David Collin
Contributor

LONDON—AS HELICOPTERS OF SNOW continue to melt, snarling relief and scratching rain from pewter skies are a balm of comfort and a welcome respite. It's still very cold, but after a short eternity the arctic freeze has moved on—for now—leaving us with windy slush and ice on the ground, crumbling roads and potholes, mountains of uncollected rubbish, frozen lakes which have claimed lives and pet dogs, and a slew of severe-weather warnings.

Despite the newly arrived thaw, we are warned against being lulled into a false sense of security; the deeply intense cold is set to continue, temperatures could still plunge further and sweet ice, again, with heavy doses of snow.

We like to say summer is just a brief intermission of winter, which finishes at the end of July and promptly starts again at the beginning of August, but we're poorly equipped to weather a desperately cold spell.

The first snowflakes fell on Dec. 17, how pretty, we said, snow on Christmas morning, we fondly hoped. Thousands of passengers were trapped underground after Eurostar trains broke down in the Channel tunnel. Flights in and out were cancelled.

It grew colder in earnest. So my son and I bought our livestock fit and ushered it with Christmas bangles, bells and baubles; we have accumulated through the years. Having lived through some harsh winters, I've learned to handle low-grade panic: shed a small fortune—rather I call it strategically shopping—in the supermarket and stock up the fridge, freezer and larders with food, bottled water and other essentials.

"Whoa!" my son exclaimed as the music of his ear slowly filled. "Are you feeling an emo?" he smiled. "If called upon, yes," I replied, only half in jest.

A few days later, panic-buying erupted as supermarkets ran out of bread, milk, vegetables. With 15 inches of snow on the roads, delivery drivers were unable to make it to supermarket depots. Lesson 1: Never underestimate your fear.

Kindness

With the mercury dipping firmly below zero, the heavens relentlessly hardened down fifteenth of snow. Armies of workers stayed home at a cost of £700 million a day to our battered economy. Motorists were stranded in tailbacks that stretched for miles; roads were closed; cars abandoned.

There is a deep well of rescue British reserve and the milk of human kindness flowed, as complete strangers offered drivers hot drinks and blankets, and when there were no more rooms at the inn, took them into their homes. Lesson 2: It could happen to you, so be kind to others, for they could be fighting a frozen battle. (As we now know with a tiny case of sorrow in the chilled and benighted mountains of Haiti.)

In sub-zero temperatures, our fears turned to open a night sleeping rough on the streets of London, to highlight the work of a charity for the homeless. Prince William bedded down in a sleeping bag padded with cardboard and narrowly avoided being run over by a road sweeper in the night. The following day, with true Windsor grit that defies snow more than his granny does his muddy, ice-cooked breakfast for a group of homeless people.

This area as close to Siberia as we could get without wearing fur hats. With Christmas just two days away Britain ground to a halt, causing widespread chaos and disruption. We don't usually get extremely severe winters, so the mindsets of mind-numbing snow were a deep upon the public spirit. Train services were curtailed, runways closed; holiday plans aborted. Lesson 3: Improvise and manage expectations so that your disappointment doesn't ruin you your happiness.

Meanwhile, my son and I shoveled and swept snow to keep the driveway free, and shoveled till we were fit to drop with exhaustion. It was futile. Snow kept coming down!

Silence and snow

My mind was still fogged with sleep when I woke up one morning in a frigid silence, the world blanketed in luminous snow; its glorious, otherworldly beauty exhilarating. How could snow encumbered trees, branches and hedgerows seem a silent haven? Adorable children built snowmen. I was almost happy in a miserable way.

It's hazardous and, like your typhoons, brings baleful reminders of our frailty, changes in our climate that would destroy us all. It's inconvenient and we really have to

HIDING neighborly in the snow—if you can get to friends' houses

'I went from looking like an unmade bed, progressing to fruit salad, to an exploded sofa'

black ice, but it's beautiful, white, pure and, as Pico Ayer wrote, "washes us loosen free of greedy and ebullient. All things must pass and all things shall return."

Between heating and food

But at a record minus 22°C, it's frightfully cold, even indoors where the boiler is on for well over 10 hours a day. Some families, in the grip of this almighty recession, are choosing between heating and food on the table. Death panels, euthanasia go mainly, euro ring and air—ache pounds just behind the eye, the cold shakes your face, movement is torpid; your entire body wants to shut down.

To keep warm, we declared fashion amnesty so that we could wear several items of clothing all at once: layers of sweaters, three pairs of socks, scarves, leggings over thick tights, pig-ugly fleeces over thermal vests, balaclavas, bobble hats—heck, the lot! I went from looking like an unmade bed, progressing to fruit salad, to an exploded sofa. A ski cap borrowed from my son made me look like I'd just been rescued from a mental asylum. With my less-sensitive hands and cankerous thinkers, I began to look like a cyclops. Who would have thought it would cost so much to look utterly disheveled? But I was warm.

When you're chewing on life's plenty, sing, Monty Python, cried grumble, give a whistle and always look on the bright side of life. Words indeed. I navigated life's passing daily trials, kept moving, cooked up a storm...visitors sang, ruminations, panic stories. I was gasping on books, DVD films, travel brochures, glossy curiosities and Dorian Mahler. Friends were just an e-mail and phone call away.

As snowdrifts swirled in a blinding white frenzy, I was snug in bed, watching a Swedish who doesn't on the box, followed by a snooze, CSI...So it's hopeless but not serious, what cannot be changed must be borne and endured...preferably with a deserted heart.

The snowdrifts gave way to falling silver sheets of ice. Dear God, be good to me! And then fragrant with memory, sweet dreams of other days, snow, of soft April showers that bring May flowers, enchanted spring evenings and the slow, gentle onset of early summer, light flooding long shadows.

A light dusting of snow covers the ground. Birdsongs and robins are going hungry in this weather, so I'll go and feed them now. But, first, a warming cup of tea.

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PLDT

PLDT Negosyo Boost Connect

Hong Kong offers much more than low-priced goods

SHED off a few pounds by taking a hike along the Nine Dragons Trail.

By Kristine Felicia Manguray

IT'S ANY SHOPAHOLIC'S dream come true. Ladies' bags and dresses at affordable prices, Gucci, Louis Vuitton. You name it, Hong Kong has it all.

But it's not only all about the shopping in this part of the world. Although the former British colony is known for its markets and bazaars, there is still a host of these 235 islands that are very many people know about.

"There is a misconception that Hong Kong is only a good shopping destination," said Cecilia Tang, visitor services executive of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. "Contrary to popular belief, Hong Kong can offer tourists much more than Gucci bags and low-priced goods."

With frequently visited places like Stanley Market and the busy Mong Kok district, it's hard to break Hong Kong's stereotyped image as one of the best shopping hubs in all of Asia.

But that that's a bad thing. It's just that, aside from the malls and the markets, it's good to know tourists can visit other places of interest. Places that have nothing to do with, well, shopping.

Nash's Ark

Aside from the ever-so-famous Hong Kong Disneyland and Ocean

CONTINUED P3

HURRAY Kitson, an architectural masterpiece

PHOTOS BY JIM EDWARD PACALDO

WHAT'S YOUR FLAVOR? UFS, PDI and DOT officials don their best "chef look" for the Sooo Pinoy campaign. In the photo are: Zafer Ulever, UFS Southeast Asia Channel Marketing Director; DOT's Director for Office of Product and Research & Development Elizabeth P. Nelle and Usec. Eduardo Jarque; PDI SVP for Sales & Marketing Rene Reinoso; UFS Managing Director Pinky Laurena; PDI AVP and Marketing Director Joel Adorable; PDI Publisher Isagani Yambot; UFS VP for Southeast Asia Jackie Chook; and CEMG President and Events Director Ed Gamos

Wanted: Pinoy food identity

By Annelle S. Tayao

We've voted for our favorite singer, favorite dancer, and even our favorite housemate; a buzz created by contests and promos Filipinos just can't get enough of. Now, Pinoys can vote for something that hits closer to home—food.

Unilever Foodsolutions, in cooperation with the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, has launched the "Sooo Pinoy" campaign, a search for the Filipinos' favorite local dish.

The campaign also introduces UFS' three newest products: Knorr Lime Powder, an alternative to calamansi in recipes; Knorr Bango Kecap Manis, a modern barbecue sauce; and Knorr Oyster Flavored Sauce, a sauce of Chinese origin that's fit to the Pinoy taste.

The campaign's memorandum of agreement-signing was held Jan. 27 at the Cibeles Kitchen, Unilever Philippines along Lih Avenue, Manila. There were top Unilever managers from Southeast Asia, as well as Eduardo Jarque Jr., DOT Undersecretary for tourism planning and promotions, and Inquirer Vented, PDI publisher.

"More than a campaign, "Sooo Pinoy" is a movement aimed to enhance what is already good about Filipino food," says Pinky Laurena, UFS Managing Director. "We want to put the Philippines on the cuisine map."

The well-loved Pinoy dishes have been short-listed by UFS' Culinary Team: Kare-Kare, Adobo, Chicken Inasal, Sisig, Sinigang na Hipon, Crispy Pata, Pinakbet, Bulalo and Daing na Bangus. Voting for your favorite can be done either online at inquirer.net, or through SMS through Inquirer mobile. Voters won't go home empty-handed; they get the chance to win a special gift from UFS.

"We based our choices on informal surveys—feedback from foodie blogs, as well as the testimonies in different restaurants, and the feedback from different chefs in the industry," says Laurena. "The top 10 results were very consistent across the different regions of the Philippines."

Aside from voting, Pinoys also get to participate in the campaign through—what else?—eating. Each of the ten short-listed dishes will be featured every week in ten different partner restaurants. A "critic" will also be assigned to the week's featured dish, to share his/her thoughts on the tasty Pinoy treat.

And to create more buzz on the "Sooo Pinoy" movement, a "Sooo Pinoy" jeepney, provided also by Unilever Foodsolutions, will be going around different places. "The jeep is a very Pinoy icon," Laurena says. "Together with our marketing and culinary teams, the campaign will visit operators—customers, chefs, community owners."

Through UFS' three new products, innovations in flavor can be explored by culinarians and enjoyed by diners. Knorr Bango Kecap Manis is a product which literally translates to "sweet soy sauce." It's perfect for grilled, roasted or fried meats. Knorr Oyster Flavored Sauce, which now adapts a distinctly Pinoy taste, is now not just confined to Chinese dishes; the sweet-savory sauce is great with Pansit Canton or dip for Crispy Pata.

There's also the convenience of using these: one liter of Knorr Lime Powder mixed with water, for instance, is equal to 300 pieces of calamansi and one and a half hours of slicing those calamansi.

Jarque, on the other hand, finds that the campaign is a new way to propagate Filipino cuisine. He shares that the "Sooo Pinoy" movement was a proposal that the DOT was quick to pick and get involved in.

"More and more tourists are looking for food when they come here; it's quite an important component in the 'tea shopping,' says Jarque. "Once they try our food, they find that it's absolutely super."

READY and moved up is the Sooo Pinoy jeepney, which will be promoting and creating buzz about the campaign in different areas in the Metro

Jarque adds that the Philippines isn't exactly top-of-mind yet when it comes to vacation destinations —Thailand and Malaysia still dominate the market. "But once they come here, our satisfaction rating is unbelievable. It's a pleasant surprise for them—and that's what we want to do for our food."

Nothing enhances the Filipino experience more than our cuisine, and Unilever Foodsolutions is an equally excited to boost Pinoy pride through the movement. As Laurena puts it, "there's always some kind of excitement when it comes to Filipino food—flavors are constantly reinvented, so there's always something new!"

A combination of the number of votes plus the opinion of a panel of judges will decide which among the 10 Sooo Pinoy dishes will be declared the No. 1 favorite. Judges will base their decision on the following criteria: the dish's unique Filipino taste, its heritage, history and versatility; its recall when it comes to consumers' and diners' food choices; and the convenience of preparing the dish, whether at home or at a restaurant.

THE NATIONAL SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE PINOY dish

Unilever foodsolutions

together with

INQUIRER LIFESTYLE

HONG Kong's temples are a reflection of the archipelago's rich cultural heritage.

IT'S QUITE a long journey on the map, but the pain is definitely worth the breathtaking scenery you'll see along the way.

Hong Kong . . .

From page F1

Both, Hong Kong at home is often amusement parks not very many people know about.

Located at Ma On on the New Territories island, for example, is Noah's Ark, an interactive learning center that uses the biblical story to "produce family values and teach love" to foreign and local visitors alike.

"Unlike Disneyland and Ocean Park, Noah's Ark aims to teach children about the importance of preserving the environment in a fun and interactive way. It's not just about having fun. It's about learning something important from the visit," said Lin Cheung, owner and program officer of the center. With its interactive games and educational activities ranging from 3D and 4D movie shows about the Earth ("Earth Day" and "The Great Flood") and exhibits, the center engages visitors of all ages who flock to the place for a peek at a giant replica of the biblical ark and participate in the park's unique and entertaining shows. Team-building activities can also be conducted in the center, with special areas like Ark Life Education House aimed for games which enhance corporate values such as trust and leadership.

Temples, photo exhibits

Art and culture enthusiasts are sure to enjoy the colorful history of encounters and cultural edifices in Hong Kong. Religious temples like Man Mo Temple near Hollywood Road and Wong Tai Sin Temple in Kowloon are a reflection of the archipelago's rich historical roots and its blend of eastern and western influences.

Photography fanatics can go to Murray House, which exhibits pictures depicting the archipelago's impressive physical transformation from World War II up to the present. A visual feast to any architecture enthusiast, Murray House stands majestic in the center of Stanley, with its heavy stone walls and colonial reminiscent of the Chanel period.

Hiking

For fitness buffs who wish to shed off a few pounds, the Nine Dragons Trail is the ideal place to visit. The more than-an-hour hike up the peak of the hill to Shatterer Bay is a grueling yet rewarding experience. The breathtaking scenery seen from the top is definitely worth the climb. Don't forget to bring lots of bottles of water with you though.

Oh, and brace yourself for cramps.

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A reunion-tribute for 'Tita' Conching

More than 150 'children' of Conching Sunico gathered in her honor last Jan. 29

By Ping Valencia
Contributor

IT ALL STARTED WITH A CONVERSATION via Facebook between Francie Jacinto (nee Aguinaldo) and me one idle July day. The subject was the birthday of Conchita Sunico, whom we lovingly called Tita Conching (or TC).

She said, "Why don't we hold a reunion in TC's honor?" And I said, "Great idea!"

Francie, with her typical determination and chuppiness, gathered a small group of TC's "children"—Carol Villar, only daughter of Tito Henry Caballero; former Miss Philippines Bembol Santos-Monasterio; Eileen Bernardo Campos; Marlene Abreu-Yang; choreographer-director Nelo Bailen; Maris Montenegro Lorenzo and me. And so, the get-together aka Kutibgan Grand Reunion was born.

It was held in the garden of a beautiful house in Forbes Park on Jan. 29.

It was both heartwarming and reassuring to feel the enthusiasm and support of the kutibgan ones—models, designers, dancers—here and those who have gone ahead, once the word spread about the event.

More than 150 "children" of TC gathered in her honor, among them Toni Serrano, Emily Beltejo, Cookie Irma Bevilla, Yogi Domingson, Charito Aguilar, Randi Sugiyo, Elsa Reyenes, Trina Tejares, Marlene Marquez, Jenn Marquez Cole, Aurora Pijuan, Margie Moran, Nelia Sinsuko, Jennifer Pena, Marlene Dominguez, Carmina Gutierrez.

And those who live abroad but attended to be part of the reunion were Techie Fornal, Dayang Sugiyo, Eve Reyes, Baby Santiago, Cynthia Cruz, Marilyn Viahono, Ms. Marquez, Nilda Ilon-Delfino, Mai Ilon Lahiri and Yogi Domingson, to name a few.

Arrow Alonzo, Christian Aquino, Bee Morales and Pitoy Moreno, living legends and members of the first Philippine Couturiers Association, attended as well, along with those who followed such as Ed Ocampo, Jesse Villarama, Oscar Penaloza and Bobby Novenario.

Kutibgan artists whom TC nurtured—Dinggoy Alonzo, Leo Salako and Cocoy Laurel—were also in attendance.

And let us not forget many of those who worked with her at the Manila Hilton and its theater. They were there, too.

CONCHING Sunico

One heart

So, to say this was a Kutibgan reunion is not truly accurate. We were but one facet of the unforgettable dots that was Conchita Sunico.

This was a reunion of all those whose lives she touched, of individuals who wish to pay tribute to a woman who inspired them to dig deep into their souls and recognize their God-given talents, whatever those might be, and embrace, develop and share them with all.

This was a tribute to a woman who unclouded grace and class, whose passion was to encourage artistic endeavors and to nurture strengths and possess the culture of the Filipinos.

I can still hear her voice calling me at sessions closing rehearsals. She screamed, she scolded, she lectured on...how she also loved us.

We felt it. And we loved her right back.

We love her still. And we miss her so very much.

The author is member of Kutibgan: Vol. 72

Century Tuna brings you the run of the centurywith Superbods Run 2010

(From left) Angela Gamboa, Century Tuna Prod. Manager Lou Flo, Director for Century Pacific Group, Ram Lopez, Derek Ramsay, Theresa Fergus, Van Victor Lozon and Gold Tamesis, Century Tuna Gen. Manager

QUEEN Sofia of Spain and her friends being treated to a Kutibgan show

Coca-Cola Para sa Happiness ng Lahat

A Pack of Happiness for Every Filipino

A good thing about the Coca-Cola 330 mL pack is that it's very convenient to carry around considering my very active lifestyle. It's the pack be perfect pair to yoga during breaks on the go and need to be refreshed that like me. Especially since I started playing golf, drinking Coke just waves on the moderate after a game, a party you may up so I can still do more. **Zanjoe Marudo, actor / golfer**

A bottle of Coke is just the right brand. I need whenever I get out of bed in the morning. I can't start my day without a cold Coke. Coke just refreshes my spirit. A Coke 1.5 L is the size for me, para sa umaga and happiness that keeps me going and going. **Yuchengco Boy, madrinas host**

Sharing moments with the people we most consider serious a family when the group because not, we make sure there's a Coke in sure to watch the shares we can relax as simple moments of fun and daughter with friends and fellow loaded. Coke must for them. **Joseph Marco, top commercial model**

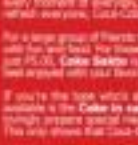
Now as deciding rainbow moments with my friends, there must always be my packs of Coke. It's what makes us bond more and the time together longer. It goes well with potato chips, barbecue or whatever snacks. In short, a Coke 1.5L makes our fellowship even more enjoyable! Perfect pairs for refreshing because as managing executive Lord now can remember. **Marvin Raymundo, actor**

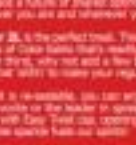
Coca-Cola signifies and reminds everyone who knows it: happy thoughts. That secret is always enough to be happy. An ice-cold Coke to can after a hard day's work, a refreshing drink to share with friends and family, a bottle of Coca-Cola paso as before having food and have bonding moments. **Dorie Kamille Frasti, Undersecretary Dept. of Agriculture**

As ice-cold Coca-Cola always comes with a smile. It's the drink I share with team mates after a hard day's training or an intense and especially when we win a game. We usually get the big packs Coke 1L, 1.5L or 2L for the whole team. Plus on everyday occasions or big celebrations, the big Coke packs are perfect to share with everyone. **Whitney Gonzales, professional basketball player, Coca-Cola Tigers**

Here as para who's always on path. I have to bring with me Coke because it's the drink that I am addicted and thoroughly like the best and that's, of course, Coca-Cola. Luckily, there are those 330ML CBT bottles. It's that quick, little pack that makes me feel energized to face anything. **Sheryl Cruz, actress**

Nothing beats a cold bottle of Coke 330mL para sa times when I'm stress, tired and thirsty, especially after a busy and hectic day. Sometimes I even have to take a quick "cat" break at anytime of the day just so I can have again an ice-cold. It must be that one of a kind taste and spirit of Coke that really makes you feel good that energy and refreshed at the same time. **Alejandro Calara, children's party planner**


Every time I drink Coke, I get a different feeling of satisfaction. After a long day or even in between my busy schedule, a can of ice cold Coke does an instant pick-me-up and smile. **Jasmine Malonzo-Ivler, fashion model**


Coke makes me feel especially youthful because every single time I see more happy memories of my childhood. There are more super refreshing times or even at when pressured with deadlines or meeting here and there, one cold bottle of Coke is just what I need to transform my workplace into a playground. **Patricia Ramos-Gloss, fashion designer**

This year, each and every Filipino looks forward to fresh start. At this time of recovery and rebuilding, Coca-Cola, being the partner to each Filipino in refreshing every moment of everyday, will continue its vow to empower a hopeful nation ready to face a future of shared optimism and positive ideals. In its commitment to refresh everyone, Coca-Cola makes itself accessible for everyone wherever you are, whenever you need it – to ensure everyone is included.

For a large group of friends that wants a refreshing barkadahan moment, the big **Coke 1.5L or 2L** is the perfect treat. This is best shared during leisure time overflowing with fun and food. For those on a smaller budget, there can enjoy the individual goodness of Coke found in the can and stores. The can P5.00, **Coke Sakto** is just right for you, every time, and time. For those with rugged thirst, why not add a few bucks to both enjoy at **8 oz.** or a **12 oz.** Coke. Best enjoyed with your favorite food and snacks. Coca-Cola's uniquely refreshing taste puts their 'satin' to make your regular food like a deliciously happy meal.

If you're the type who's always on call, the **Coke 300mL** grip is for you. Because it is reversible, you can enjoy the refreshing wherever you need it. Also available is the **Coke to can** designed for every young Filipino on the basis of its appealing cheers. Coke bottle, for those moms who usually prepare good food, the Coke chemistry is just right for you. Now with Coke, the true and long-lasting happiness for the family has become purified. This only shows that Coca-Cola is truly with you, 24/7, 365 days every year. That irrepressible sparkle fuels our spirits!

Indeed, happiness is just around the corner waiting to be unleashed. After all, the first step to recovery and rebuilding a refreshed spirit filled with happiness.

THIERRY Mugler Alien eau de parfum

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Travel the world in scents on Valentine's

THE DAY OF ROMANCE ALSO becomes a celebration of beauty as Boston's The Beauty Source brings to the Clarco metro favors around the globe.

"The Beauty Source is the new haven for the most exclusive names in beauty and scents. With this, we continue to bring home to Boston's the best of the world," says Boston's cosmetics and toiletries marketing communications manager Sevelie Mendez.

Men and their evolving tastes could explain that scents their lifestyle. Gourmet Sky's light and natural scent, as well as Diptyque Lumière Blanc, with notes of blackcurrant leaf and Bulgarian rose, suit a laid-back lifestyle.

The active man, however, may prefer the blended adult of lavender with peppery nutmeg and laurel wood in Hermès Eau

PACO Rabanne 1 Million perfume

TANYA/14

Blackcurrant for the laid-back; peppery nutmeg for the active

DIPTYQUE L'Ombre Dans L'Eau, L'Eau

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Registration period
Regular Registration: January 11 - February 8, 2010
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Globe

Travel the world in scents on Valentine's

Cedarwood for the man of style

CREED Imperial Millesime

BANNICK Quinta Mandragora

BANCE Triangles

Fragrance #1:
de Toilette For Men.

Medine for Elixir Fragrance, on the other hand, has the long-lasting freshness of natural extracts.

For the outward gentleman, there's Bance Triangles's cedarwood and musk with hints of vanilla, or search for sleek style. Crowd Imperial Gold, framed for its golden look and feel, is more perfumed by lack of stature.

Paco Rabanne 1 Million makes our date extra special sizzling with its bottle that's covered in 18-K gold and set with a 0.3-carat diamond.

Annick Goutal's Mandragore for Him suggests mystery with the scents of bergamot, black pepper, spearmint and star anise oil.

For the passionate and romantic women, Annick Goutal has the seductive and delicate scent of Un Matin d'Orage. Acca Kappa's Cedrosellina is lived with notes of jasmine and orange blossom.

For the woman that radiates simple elegance, Bvlgari's Pour Elle is at the top of the list, as well as Thierry Mugler Alien. For something sweet and playful, Bvlgari Rose's flirtatiousness and Miss Dior in Love.

Juliet Has a Gun's Miss Charming and Bond 9's Kid are the joyful interpretations of blended fruits, resulting happy and sparkling moods.

As sophisticated women go for the classics, there are scents that don't lose their irresistible freshness. Chanel No. 5 tops the list of the classic perfect gift.

There's also Acqua di Gioia by Giorgio Armani for the smell of white musk, amber and jasmine. Contemporary elegance is found in Dior by Caroline Herrera with its unique blend of vanilla bourbon and orange flower, along with Manuel Cinco de Life Bleue with its citrus and aromatic fragrance inspired by the island of Capri.

All brands are exclusively distributed by Watsons Commercial Corp. and are available at Watson's The Beauty Source, Watson's Makati, Shangri-La Mall, Greenbelt, Alabang Town Center and Robinsons Cubao.

Fruity blends for joyful moods

FLOWER by Kenzo

SONIA Rykiel Blue & Elite

MISS Elite

JULIET Has a Gun Miss Charming

Jasmine to stir up passion and seduction

BOTSALINO Pour Elle EDT Fleurie

BANNICK Goutal Un Matin D'Orage

ACCA Kappa Cedrosellina

The classics

CHANEL No. 5

CAROLINA Herrera Chic

ACQUA di Gioia

MANUEL Cinco de Life Bleue

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■ **Kristen, Dakota rock in new film** In Hollywood /J1

AND SHE WANTS THE RUMOR TO STOP. Krista Bautista is photographed with boxing gloves in this poster-ad sighted on T. Morato, Quezon City. Who's afraid of crossing her path? Her Dina Alajar's son Geoff Eigenmann. Story on page H2 JOCJOC M. PANGILINAN

Gozon: Not a loyalty check

'Just a social gathering,' says GMA 7 president

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

FELIPE L. GOZON, CHAIR, CEO AND president of GMA 7, couldn't be more emphatic: "I am not conducting a loyalty check among my stars and staff."

The alleged loyalty check was supposedly prompted by rumors that TV5, now under the management of businessmen Manny V. Pangilinan, has begun raiding GMA 7's stable of talents.

"YOU can ask them," said Gozon.

Last last year, Paolo Bediones, former host of GMA 7's "Interview Philippines," moved to TV5, not just as an on-cam anchor but also as a programming officer.

In an interview held at the Philippine Advertising Congress at about the same time, Bobby Barretto, TV5's CEO, confirmed with bravado that other networks have conducted "loyalty checks" among talents and employees.

Gozon denied specifically that the series of dinner parties recently held in his newly renovated North Forbes home was his way of sensing employee commitment.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Casual setting

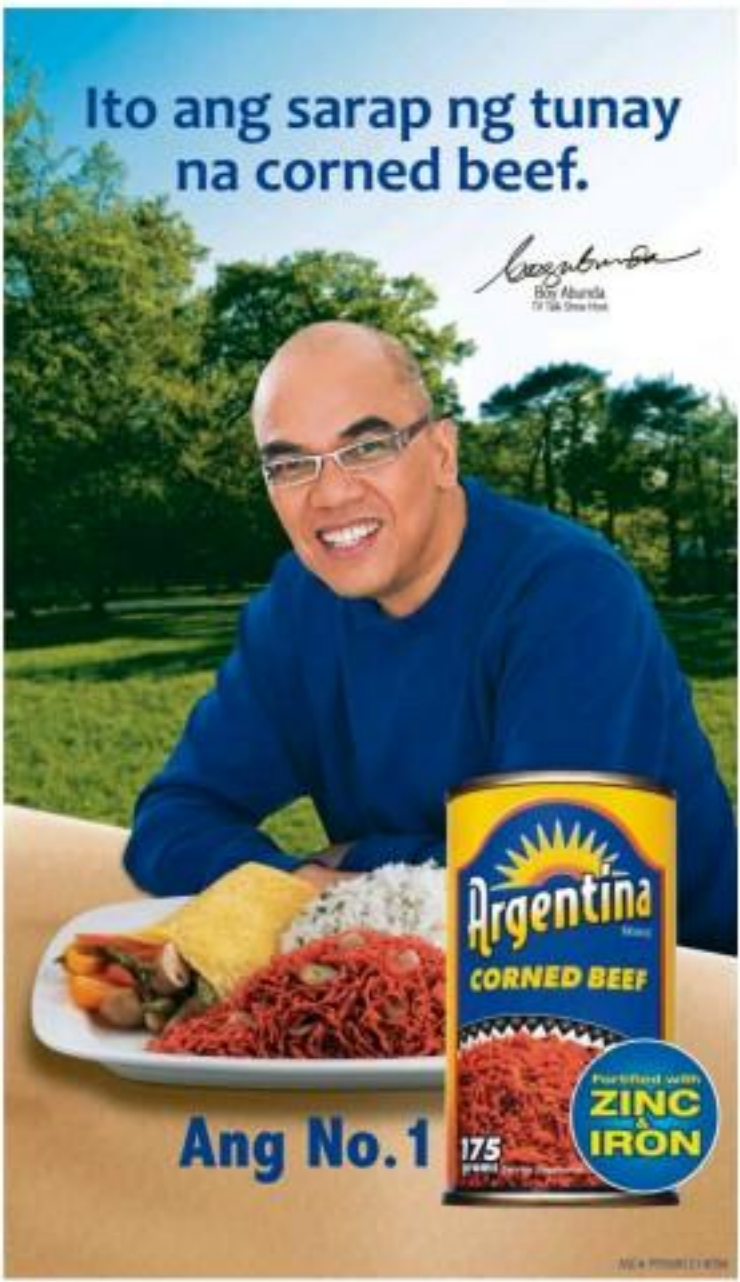
"I just wanted them to see me at home, in a more casual setting. But you can ask them, we didn't talk business that night," he noted.

Among the guests at the first party were the channel's top talents Dingdong Dantes, Marian Rivera, Gabi Alfonzi and Michael V. My 6-year-old grandson Andy is Michael V.'s fan," Gozon said. More than anything, he added, the party allowed his grandson to pose in snapshots with the "Bubble Gang" star. "Even the household staff got souvenir photos."

As a bonus, he pointed out, he got to open the lines of communication with his stars that night.

He hosted a separate dinner with the male stars of the GMA hetaw Conor last Jan. 17. Among those present were Iza Calzado, Ritlee Ramos, Marvin Agustin, Aljur Abrenica, Eric Bernal, Vaalee Sarmiento, LJ Reyes and Jean Mitch

GOZON, K3



CHOOSE YOUR *Valentine* SHOW

EVERY YEAR, Inquirer Entertainment helps readers pick a show for that special day by asking the concert artists to talk about their gigs … and romance.

MENCHU Lauzon-go Velo and Raymond Lauzon-go

Sibling Revelry

Raymond Lauchengco and Menchu Lauchengco Feb. 14, 8 p.m. Alfresco at 6,98-747-A at 1, Rockwell Tent, Makati. Call 0906 1286569.

Did you look forward to Valentine's Day when you were teenagers, and how did you spend it?

Raymond (RL): I was disappointing Menchu mostly. It was more of a no-nonsense for me. Wondering what this day of love was really all about and how grownups would spend it. Wondering when I would fall in love and how it would happen.

Menchu (M): A teenager who is in love always looks forward to Valentine's Day! But since you have to depend on your allowance, celebrating the event usually means either cooking a movie and grabbing a bite…or just spending the day together. A crazily written card would usually be the spot.

Can you recall a time when you felt sad on that day?

R: If I were to think of all the people I know with failed relationships, who didn't have the kind of milk that it is, that would make me sad. So I try not to think of that question on Valentine's Day.

M: Not really … but I think being single or unattached on this special day of lovers might make someone sad. Looking now that I'm married, this is no longer an issue.

What would be an ideal Valentine date?

R: Drifting away, being alone, staring into each other's eyes all night … Or doing a Valentine show, having a microphone and being able to profess your love to front of a lot of people!

M: I think just being with the person you love makes it ideal. But then again, a trip to some exotic hideaway together wouldn't hurt.

What's the best Valentine concert you've seen lately and why?

R: Unfortunately, singers don't usually get to watch other Valentine shows; they're doing their own.

M: I haven't really seen many Valentine concerts lately because usually I'm performing in one of them.

What's the most uniquely written love song for you?

R: "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?" (lyrics by Alan Bergman and Marilyn Bergman, music by Michel Legrand, for the 1969 film "The Happy Ending"). The writer does not waste any time, going straight to the point via this poignant, soft and bubbly, hauntingly beautiful love song around it.

M: I don't really know of any uniquely written love song, but I love the message of "The Promise."

Why should we watch your concert?

R: Our show offers a very unique and refreshing combo, with Menchu and myself singing what's chosen to our hearts…from big band standards, ballads and songs from Broadway and the West End. The last time I was in Las Vegas, one of the most successful shows to watch was Donny and Marie. That got us thinking, why not?

Our show also has a four-course set dinner by Le Cordon Bleu trained chef Ides Del Rosario.

M: Because for one, it is performed by a brother and sister! Not too many of this kind of show around. And we come from two different worlds of the entertainment scene. It should make for an interesting mix of songs.

Forever Love … With Your Special Valentine Date

Rich Ledesma, Christopher de Leon and Jonari Elena, Feb. 12 and 13, Cagayan's Bar, Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati. Call 721.8633 or 721-0720.

How did you spend Valentine's Day before you became famous?

Rich Ledesma: I would be out on a date, to a dinner and I love maybe a movie.

Tell us about your most unique Valentine date experience.

So unique Valentine experience yet.

What would be an ideal Valentine date?

Would love to go out of town, to a beach, have a moonlit dinner and talk all night.

Name other artists who could do a perfect Valentine show.

Ikal, Barbra Streisand, Marvin Sisters, Gary Valenciano

Among the millions of love songs out there, what's the most romantic for you and why?

"You and I" by Stevie Wonder. The song is so human and real and it connects many things about love between one people.

Why should we watch your concert?

You will fall in love again and get a lot of tips on how to keep your love forever.

Love 2 Love 2 Love

Side A, Rizal and Freestyle, Feb. 12, 8 p.m., Araneta Coliseum. Call 911-3333

How did you spend Valentine's Day before you became famous?

Jessy Brimotong (JB) of Side A: The usual, I would buy a gift for my wife and we would have dinner at our favorite restaurant.

Jinky Vidal (JV) of Freestyle: It flowed out loved eating at Tapa restaurant. We would order our favorites, tapsilog, sisilog, and then we would go see a movie. One movie I could never forget was "Sixteen Years."

Tell us about your most unique Valentine date experience.

JG: We were almost done with our Valentine's dinner, enjoying our coffee. My wife assumed herself to go to the restroom. When she returned, she found a bouquet under her coffee cup, on top of the saucer. It was my Valentine's gift for her. The restaurant on her face was just too precious and memorable for me.

JV: It wasn't a date but a chore. I opened it with thousands of people at the Araneta Coliseum when we performed with Lani Misalucha and Jessa Zaragoza.

What would be an ideal Valentine date?

JG: A trip out of the country, maybe Las Vegas to watch Barry Manilow.

JV: Have a romantic dinner in a nice little French restaurant in Paris with the Eiffel Tower in the background. We'll have great food and lots of picture taking.

Name other artists who could do a perfect Valentine show.

JG: Whitney Houston, Basil Valdez.

JV: I've always dreamed of working with Jay Durias of Imotdi Border. That is me. I would be a perfect Valentine show.

Among the millions of love songs out there, what's the most romantic for you and why?

JG: "Through the Years" and "Miles Away" because those are favorites of my wife and myself since we courtship days.

JV: The most romantic song for me is "What Matters Most." That is also one of my dream wedding songs of all time.

Why should we watch your concert?

JG: Side A and Freestyle are paired a good show and we worked hard for this.

JV: We worked hard to put on a great show! We will cover a lot and have so much to offer. It will be a show well worth your time and money.

Legends In Love

Rico J. Puno, Eva Eugenio and Ray Valera, Feb. 13, 8 p.m., The Glyceria, 3M North Edsa, Quezon City. Call 813-0404.

How did you spend Valentine's Day when you weren't famous yet?

Eva Eugenio (EE): Normal lang. Any date kami ng boyfriend ko bang iyon. I was studying at the University of the East so dati ng sasakyanin Valentine's Day was also a sad time for me after my boyfriend of many years died. Siesta to accompany din ako. It was my first serious relationship.

Ray Valera (RV): Not famous means wala pang pera, ha what did you expect? If di mong mama sa gati. Friend mi pare me pang-date kaya.

Tell us about your most unique Valentine date experience.

EE: It wasn't a date, but it was very memorable for me. I think it was most unique because it was the first time I realized that I was becoming famous. Mugging successful na ako as a singer. While going "Talon" mom. It was the time of my first hit, "Mahal Ba Ko Siya?" I was invited to Davao for The Letterman at the Araneta Coliseum. I was so nervous and excited. It turned out well. Hindi ako na-boo. That time kasi yung mga Pinoy who form-ay for foreign artists, boo-boo-ng-mga Pilipino.

RV: I love my wife. I cannot live without her. She has all my money. So I asked her money as "surprise" her with some flowers. When she found out how expensive the flowers were, she nosebleed me. Funny Valentine.

What would be an ideal Valentine date?

EE: Ordinary girl ako. As gusto ko roses, chocolates, a dinner date, then again we would watch a show.

He should be very sweet. Okay din nung may slapsli pang ibang regalo. Aring sa isa lamanan. Pwede ring kiss. Kidding aside, so long as two are with the one you love, ideal date na yun.

RV: Someone who will treat all her life.

RICO Puno, Ray Valera and Eva Eugenio

Among the millions of songs out there, what's the most romantic for you and why?

EE: "The Way You Look Tonight" because it promises love for a long, long time. "Someday when I'm awfully low/When the world is cold/I will feel a glow just thinking of you/And the way you look tonight … " Ta ha! Ewng memories ng tagpuan kanggang forever.

RV: Try Boy Valera songs. They work like magic. Really. No kidding. Honest.

Why should we watch your concert?

EE: I will very hard to entertain the audience. I give people their money's worth. Ang kinikipagtagan ko today as attendee gagawin ko. Ito to, too-ling, gaman din a kiss at a kiss. Kaya can you imagine us together? I am sure "Legends" will be a most enjoyable show. And we have live… Maybe I noticed that people like harmony to one kiss sa balcanie kami ng mayroon sun.

RV: After seeing our concert, believe you Rico Puno and Ray Valera, you will look handsome in the eyes of your date. Therefore, you can "score."

Who's afraid of Krista? Not Geoff

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

GMA 7 ACTOR GEOFF EIGENMANN IS A self-confessed mama's boy, and his "The Last Prince" co-star Carla Abellana considers this one of his endearing traits. "I'm also devoted to my family," explained Carla.

Geoff admitted, again: "My brothers and I are close to my mom."

The bond was tested when his mother, award-winning actress Gina Alajar, was mired in the Reina Raiello-Manny Pacquiao controversy last last year.

Geoff's comment on the Manny Krista tattoo in her Facebook account sparked a media row; Krista's alleged past involvement with Orson's ex-husband Michael de Mesa was dredged up as well.

Naturally, Geoff came to his mom's rescue. "I had to say my piece. It's only natural for me to defend her."

He wished his mom had kept mum on the issue. "But it had come out in the press; she had every right to express her opinion."

The incident has involved Michael, who is now based in the United States. "My dad was surprised that the issue came up again," Geoff said, "after all this time, after all these years, when nothing was heard about it."

Geoff recalled that the rumors about Michael and Orson started when he was in his teens. "I was just 16." He and Bobbi are the same age, he reminded.

He recalled that when his dad called at the time of the recent scandal, "He just asked what happened and if we were okay. There was no harm done to us and to him. It just caught us by surprise."

If he ever bumped into Orson, he said, he wouldn't mind. "We're a mixed public in the past. I wasn't affected at all." It's such a small industry, he noted. "In fact, Bey [Carla and Krista] have the same manager. Cie-nold Singkiat."

But should they meet again...?

"I wouldn't worry. I don't even mind working with her. The bigger question is, would she be okay with that? I'm not sure."

Curiously, though, he wouldn't want Krista's name brought into the conversation.

Michael is set to visit Manila end of February to attend the wedding of Geoff's brother, Kjerp.

Although his parents are separated, they're maintained a cordial relationship, Geoff said. "My mom knows that my dad will be here for

GEOFF Eigenmann

"My dad was surprised that the rumor came up again"

the wedding."

Since Pops is getting married, Geoff will be the only one left in his mom's home. "I desire to stay in the household experience," Geoff said. "I also think my mom's not ready to live alone just yet either."

Spoken like a true Mama's boy.

GINA Alajar

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

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Greenbelt

Gozon...

from page 61

Yesterday, Gozon was out to meet with the Heroes and Pedds office boys.

Jessica Soho, vice president of Hero Programs, said she has had been hosting intramural gatherings with "regulars" on a regular basis.

"It's nothing new for previously invited as to the Manila Golf and Country Club. But this is the first time we'll have a chat. As Cielo's season is his home," Soho said.

Gozon said he didn't organize a party with the network officers because "We see each other every month, during our regular meetings."

Game plan

He insisted that the move of Pilipinas Kahraan, senior vice president for Entertainment, moving to TV5 is not true either. "We've denied that repeatedly."

He explained: "I heard some of our staff had been approached to move [with Boodlefight], but they declined."

He is not perturbed by talk of piracy. "We're used to that. Even before TV5, we already lost some of our people to other channels."

His game plan remained generic? "Our will just continue doing what we do."

E-mail: bayanisandiego@yahoo.com

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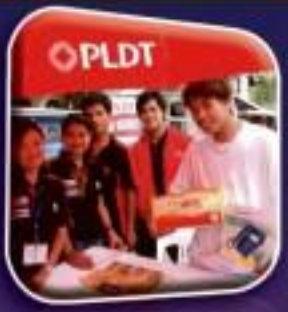

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FREDDIE Garcia is the next "tagalog" judge at a Philippine reality talent search, wearing the circumflex of Englishness in Hollywood. Simon Cowell (left), previously tried on for size by Wyngard Tracy (center).

Freddie set to do a Simon

By the Staff

CURRENTLY TOURING the country for the reality talent show "Philippine Got Talent" (with Kris Aquino and Ai Ai de las Alas) is former ABS-CBN president and CEO Freddie M. Garcia.

RUSHES SUNDAY

Still ABS, as Garcia is called by colleagues, but the latest Pinoy version of the irrepressible Simon Cowell of "American Idol"?

Short of seeing yet, Ai Ai said of Garcia: "He's a naughty kind of judge," added Kris, "He is the ultimate star-maker." The trio got back yesterday from a new daytime drive at the Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro City.

Ai Ai and Gil in the early days of "Idol" (and "Pilipinas" another show, "Bidasan's Got Talent," which Simon Cowell-Garcia has successfully made himself scarce for letters about the show.

Will he also be hated for being a "naughty"? Always.

Among those who have accepted Pinoy version of Simon's seat are Kyla Cayabyab and Wrangel Tracy, both jurors of the Philippine franchise of "American Idol." Those two, like Garcia, are huge ego-maulers.

P15M for 5 hours

Provincial Politico allegedly faced Controversial Celebrity. For a small, town gig that cost P1 million per hour.

Since the show lasted five hours, our source said, (C) is what he totaled a cool P15 million.

No wonder Gil has amassed as many enemies as his material possessions. It really doesn't help that (C) likes flaunting newfound wealth, explained the source.

Shop till they break up

Scandalous Beauty supposedly called it quits with Rich Boyfriend—very luncheon-o-mantic reasons, said a spy.

During a recent holiday in Hong Kong, BF purportedly spent over P8 million shopping for Tory Burch bags in the Harmon boutique.

Stuck with the bill, BF was livrated, according to another souls. BF is back in the arms of another Billionaire Lover, other's more tolerant of her macabre fund sprees.

Starlet's real love

Mystery solved.

Gorgeous Starlet is keen on encouraging rumors of romance with Hunky Partner because she wants to keep indulgent managers away from her real boyfriend, son of Multi-A Millionaire.

Who knows BF who stole a red lantern? But that's frankly surprising, because GS traded a lucrative endorsement deal with MM's companies.

Quite coincidentally, MM's grandson was linked to another Pretty Actress who is GS' co-leagur in the same studio.

Seems MM's boys are into home-titled young celebrities.

Mistresses' club

As they say: Birds of a feather flock together.

According to a former friend, Controversial Starlet now hangs out with girls with a rather unsavory reputation as home-wreckers.

Perhaps GS and her girl pals are comparing notes on how to best steal men away from their wives?

GS' latest boyfriend, Popular Personality reportedly grew fond of her because she's thrifty—unlike PP's wife, who's a material girl.

But with her current friends, GS has picked up a new addiction: shopping in Chanel, Gucci, Hermes and other upscale stores.

An insider predicts: It's only a matter of time before PP grows [illegible]

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GALLERIA

1 THE BLIND SIDE
2 LEGION
3 AVATAR
4 ORIGIN OF FREAK: THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
5 PAANO NA KAYA
6 SOLOMON KANE
7 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS (Digital 3D)
8 Valentino: ILAW SHERLOCK HOLMES
9 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
10 THE TOOTH FAIRY

MANILA | **METRO EAST**

1 THE TOOTH FAIRY
2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 ORIGIN OF FREAK: THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
4 LEGION
5 PAANO NA KAYA
6 THE BLIND SIDE
7 SOLOMON KANE

1 ORIGIN OF FREAK: THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
4 THE BLIND SIDE
5 THE TOOTH FAIRY
6 AVATAR
7 LEGION
8 SOLOMON KANE

MOVALICHES | **FORUM ROBINSONS**

1 SOLOMON KANE
2 ORIGIN OF FREAK: THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
3 PAANO NA KAYA
4 LEGION

1 LEGION
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 THE BLIND SIDE
4 ORIGIN OF FREAK: THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

Featured FILM of the week

STA. ROSA | **LIPA**

1 LEGION
2 THE TOOTH FAIRY
3 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
4 PAANO NA KAYA

1 ALIWAG THE SUPERHERO: THE BEGINNINGS
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 AVATAR
4 SHERLOCK HOLMES
5 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

DASMARINAS | **STARMILLS**

1 LEGION
2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 PAANO NA KAYA
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

1 PAANO NA KAYA
2 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
3 AVATAR
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY
5 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
6 LEGION

IMUS | **ANGELES**

1 PAANO NA KAYA
2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 LEGION
4 THE TOOTH FAIRY

1 LEGION
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

TACLOBAN | **DUMAGUETE**

1 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
2 LEGION
3 PAANO NA KAYA

1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 PAANO NA KAYA

BACOLOD | **ILOILO**

1 LEGION
2 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 ALIWAG THE SUPERHERO: THE BEGINNINGS
5 PAANO NA KAYA
6 AVATAR

1 LEGION
2 PAANO NA KAYA
3 THE TOOTH FAIRY
4 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
5 LEGION
6 AVATAR

GENSAN

1 THE SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 PAANO NA KAYA
4 ALIWAG THE SUPERHERO: THE BEGINNINGS

BAGUIO NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 PAANO NA KAYA

Bridges is brilliant in 'Crazy Heart'

IN SOME SETTOO-INSPECTED parallel universe, Jeff Bridges really might be living the life of a lousy country singer.

Bridges seems like the real thing in "Crazy Heart," rasping out songs in the comfortable croonings of a whiskey and tobacco-soaked — who else can single-name you've heard on a hundred jukeboxes in a hundred anonymous roadhouses.

It's not a great singing voice, but it's a soulful one, and Bridges matches it with some of the finest performances of his career, just playing the hell out of this guy whose self-abuse has carried him to a precipice where he either leaps into the pit or turns back and cleans up.

Good-luck charm

Academy Awards fever is swirling around Bridges, nominated four times previously without a win. "Crazy Heart" feels like a potential Oscar contest for Bridges, who has a nice good-luck charm in Rod Blaker, the co-star Robert Duvall, the 1982 Best Actor winner for 1983's "Tender Mercies," another story of a downtrodden country singer.

Adapted by first-time director Scott Cooper from Thomas Cobb's novel, the film opens with Bridges' character in apt name for this week of a musician who has spoiled his many musicians, his career, his liver and lungs — pretty much everything a man can ruin.

He's not black-hearted bad — he's actually quite a charmer and very funny when he doesn't let his sorry side overwhelm things. But he is bad — bad for himself and bad for others — and life has handed him more than his share of bad breaks.

Bad's still chugging through the heartland in his 30s/motel of a 1970s tour: utility vehicle, playing in dive bars and bowling alleys with pickup bands from town to town. His audiences are small but adoring, even when he's so drunk he has to climb off-stage to throw up in a trash can to a loud ovation. Bridges' performance is so perfect in the song he's just dedicated to an ex-wife-eyed bar.

The man's had a taste of success, but nothing like the superstardom of his old protégé Tommy Sweet (Colin Farrell), who has moved mega-hits recording some of the rarest Bad has written.

Assimilated to one-night stands, Bad finds himself in a hotel's frame of mind when he falls for Jean Craddock (Maggie Gyllenhaal), a single mom and local reporter who has interviews him reluctantly he's on the road.

Despite their age differences, Bridges and Gyllenhaal ease into remarkable believability, the relationship sparkling in the good times and truly convincing in the bad.

Like Bridges' Bad in "The Big Lebowski," Bad abides, his confidence in his current emergence out more to his inner devotion to making music. With a little help from his ex-owner pal Wayne (Duvall), Bad takes some first steps to getting clean and sober.

Bridges is on good Bad pushover this guy even when he is bad, even when he messes up. You're not sure he'll make it, but you believed him from the start, and all you can do is root for him and hope things turn out well.

The story has its little cliches, yet it never succumbs to them, maintaining a sense of the unexpected and sincerity in the reclamation project Bad is making of his life.

Cooper, who has appeared in several films with Duvall, makes an assured filmmaking debut, doing what good actors-turned-directors do — staying out of the way of their performers and letting them rise.

REVIEW

Memorable songs

The real behind-the-scenes name on Tchaw Jarrett, also a producer on "Crazy Heart," and his songwriting collaborator Stephen Bruton, who died of cancer last spring as production was wrapping on the film.

Bruton, the mentor-star behind the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" soundtrack, and Bruton cast memorable songs that sound as though they were real country hits for somebody, particularly on the nice work plus and catchy theme of a tune titled "Fallin' & Flyin'."

The songs become authentic individual by Bridges, whose Bad Blake may wish his life had turned out differently but is never going to dribble worries his shot glass as long as he still can. Bad's magic somewhere to belt out a tune.

AP

Freddie set to do a Simon

From page 6

band of CE and her sleepaholic pose).

Not so innocent

Cara think looks like an actor cute school boy but he has a second way in the pop community.

CH is an alleged next boy who changes willing pay boinfection (5 CGM per day).

CH is also the favorite of Pureoked fans, who keeps casting (he boy in little and you'll miss-him rules in various projects.

Tremilia's refuge

NEW YORK—John Travolta said on Thursday that Faith has helped him survive the tragic death of his 16-year-old son, Jett.

The actor, a noted Scientologist, walked the red carpet in New York with wife Kelly Preston to promote his new film, "From Paris With Love." The movie was filmed in late 2008, and shooting wrapped just days before Jett Travolta died on Jan. 2, 2009.

"We work hard every day with our church on healing," Travolta said, though he did not mention Scientology by name. "And Kelly and I and Ella have all been working very hard and they've been helping us," he said, referring to Ella-rell, Preston and their daughter.

Jett Travolta died after a seizure at the family's vacation home in the Bahamas.

Asked what gave him the strength to return to his movie career, Travolta said: "Grace you get yourself stable, then you're able to reach out again." AP

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in Philippine Daily Inquirer tabloid this week. (And why we

PRESTON and John Travolta at the NY premie of "From Paris With Love."

are excited, if we are excited.)

- Geoff Eigenmann: scandalist fop? Rabid Rambo? (We can guess why.)
- Toni: Gonzaga, Alessandra de Rossi: super playdate? (We can guess why.)
- James: Yap: cursed concert? Jay Khu: Aquino. (We can guess why.)
- Bailey: escapade in Jaimee. (Ay, why?)
- Kristine: euphoria as rape: hubsang Jolanoli boy James. (We know why.)
- Bella: Gutierrez: bill to bill? Jay Ritz. (We don't know why.)
- Sparkong: pinapari ako!—Sid Lucero. (Bai why?)
- Ritz: Chris grabs as ang kapatid. (Thyroid problems or, heaven forbid...?)
- Jose: Cuneta: may mensaheng pa or ayaw ng bagay (Another cooking show?)
- Jesse: Corita: kung sino-sino lalaki ang ka-date? (Ahangan nanaung girls.)
- Angelica: Panganiban: big ang ka-mensahe ang bunda? (That's a problem?)
- Marian: Rivera-Dingdong: Buntis nagpa-secret marriage? (Dalaw me! Kailangan pa bang i-secret yun?)
- Sandara: Aghajanni: payag ga-mantay sa Marlene Aguilar. (Naku, mawawang pang-awards nominees.)
- Judy Ann: Santos: bansal buking pagbabalik sa TV: ano TV lang, multinet?)

DIRECTOR Diego Luna at both the premiere of "Abel" during the 2010 Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 23 in Park City, Utah.

'24' Season 7: No shortage of merciless villains for Jack Bauer

By Oliver M. Palomaki
Contributor

AFTER A SEASON OF BREADfully predictable and exhausted story lines, action series "24" regains watch a renewed sense of mercilessness in its seventh season. Kiefer Sutherland portrays iconic Jack Bauer once again, the no-nonsense agent who's gotten really good at averting terrorist assault on American soil.

Click!

Season 7 immediately starts with interesting twists and turns. CTU (Counter Terrorist Unit) has been disbanded, so Jack (winner of an impending attack from the FBI. Bauer's former co-worker and friend Tony Almeida (Carlos Bernard), long thought deceased, is alive and kicking, and may be considering a terrorist attack. But Almeida is undercover and covertly working with former CTU de-gooders Chloe O'Brian (Mary Lynn Rajskub) and Bill Buchanan (James Morrison).

Just as navigating in the soccer-mom and non-working-class TV President Allison Taylor (Cherry Jones). Initially unaware of a plot to destabilize her government from within, President Taylor is about to send troops to a chemical-fertilizer country. Calculated and in direct retaliation, terrorists have her family and countless Americans at the fateful day.

The cast of "24" is partly redistributed due to the addition of President Taylor, as well as FBI lovegirls Jenni Gold (Anastasia Garnich), and determined FBI agent Renee Walker (Annie Wersching). The new dynamics, especially the new characters' interactions and uneasy alliances with Bauer, evolve and spice up tension, reminding us that despite his continued defiance of rules, he relies heavily on the assistance of a few trustworthy allies.

The season doesn't have a shortage of unscrupulous villains. Bauer regularly encounters moral-less adversaries, from disposable henchmen to a disguised counterspy. But some of his most dangerous foes this time include General Anne Dyle Dodd, whose forces took the President's homage inside the White House, and Jonas Hodges (Jon Voight), who commands a well-armed and imposing private army.

"24" is mostly well-paced, although there are slow diversions that hardly pique interest for succeeding episodes, and scenarios that ultimately translate to unnecessary padding. Still, much has improved, and long-time fans will especially appreciate the return of familiar faces and continuity ties to previous seasons. While Jack Bauer may not change much, the character is finally defined as a full-fledged hero, racing against time and doing whatever it takes to take down the most corrupt, horrible miscreants of the day.

Season 7 of "24" previously aired on Fox. It begins again airs Tuesdays, 8p.m., on RPN-9 for TV.

'The Good Wife'

Julianna Margulies returns to the small screen on Hallmark Channel's (Access) drama, "The Good Wife," every Thursday at 10 p.m.

Best known for her character Nurse Carol Hathaway in "E.R.," Margulies plays Alicia Florrick, a mother and wife whose life is turned around when her husband Peter Florrick (Chris Noth) is involved in a public sex and corruption scandal that lands him in jail.

Couture contest

The couture contest "The Fashion Show" airs Wednesdays on ETC at 10 p.m., with international acclaimed fashion designer Issac Mizrahi and Grammy winning performer Kelly Rowland as hosts.

Each week, designers are put in the test to see how two challenges, from creating a party outfit appropriate for the office to designing a red carpet gown.

Exploring space

Discovery Channel documents space explorations and looks at what it takes to conduct a mission to outer space in "How Do They Do It: Space." From launching and maintaining the space shuttle to mounting the millions of the astronauts and collecting vaster data, it puts the spotlight on NASA's space exploration program to reveal how the biggest engineering project on the planet is made possible.

It premieres Feb. 7 at 9 p.m., with reruns on Feb. 8 at 11 a.m., 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., Feb. 13 at 5 p.m. and Feb. 14 at 4 a.m. and 6 a.m.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Kristen, Dakota rock in 'Runaways'

Film about a man kidnapped and buried in coffin makes splash

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Rahvin T. Salgados

NEW YORK — FROM SUBDUED recitals here to the Big Apple, we catch our breath and look back at the films we saw in the Sundance Film Festival.

Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning rock as Joan Jett and Cherie Currie, respectively, in Floria Sigismondi's adaptation of "Neon Angel: The Cherie Currie Story" by Cherie. Executive produced by Joan herself, "The Runaways" tells the rise and fall of the pioneering teenage girl band of the same name in the 1970s.

Focusing on Joan and Cherie, the film follows the girls from their first rehearsals in a dusty, decrepit rather to their encore, including a whole montage over lost in Japan, and their eventual downfall. Dakota has the thornier role as a glam rock teen and runs away with it. Kristen plays Joan with a confident brio of toughness and sensitivity.

We didn't get to watch Kristen's other Sundance entry, "Welcome to the Rileys," where she plays a strippers hooker. The film got good buzz in the fest's end.

In "Nicky," Joseph Gordon-Levitt does a complete about-face from his engaging love-struck geeking (and writes in "1,000 Days of Summer") to a long-haired, pent-searching artichist who wreaks melee on impact on a grieving family. Joseph's title character keeps tabs into the house of a father (Hudson Wilson), a son (Devin Brochu) and a granddaughter (Piper Laurie) who are mourning the death of a loved one, Natalie Portman, who is one of the film's producers, tries to make herself look plain with dorky glasses and messy hairstyle as a grocery checkout girl who captures the schizoid attentions of Devin's character, T.J.

No backstory

The cast is good, especially the always watchable Joseph, but reflexively, his rebellious behavior gets tiresome and predictable. No explanations or backstory is allowed as to why Hudson behaves the way he does. At a young boy dealing with the loss of his mother, a lethal, unexpected foster guest who incited himself in, a finally treats hell and no explanation with an older girl, Devin is excellent.

Can you endure a movie that shows nothing but a man buried in a coffin pleading to be rescued from his kidnappers? It's a testament to Ryan Reynolds' talent and presence that we are kept absorbed by his dilemma when he wakes up in the coffin with nothing but a cell phone and a lighter. There are no cutaway shots to the world outside this dark, claustrophobic setting — just Ryan, the voices of his callers and his own shouts and a camera appreciation by a make get our attention for over an hour.

We sure would like to know the terrible ghosts service providers of Ryan's trunk. Actor character because even if he is locked away deep somewhere in foreign soil, he had created close an exception when he with a fake back home in the El of it.

Written, directed and starring Jean Kouboyer (who stars in the movie "How I Met Your Mother"), "Happythankyoumoreplease" made us want to say "Thank you but no more please." The story of annoying infantilist is dull and like Henry hoping that Josh, who has serious charisma, finds better material in his next movie.

"Holy Rollers," about young Hasidic Jews who smuggled Ecstasy from Amsterdam to New York in the late 1990s, breathes life into the casting of Jesse Eisenberg ("Zombieland," "adventureland") as a man torn between conflicting worlds. Jesse keeps us interested in the story that shuffles between the Hasidic community in Brooklyn and the drug scene in Amsterdam.

Engaging, undeveloped

"Blue Valentine" features two of the most engaging, underrated actors in cinema: Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams, engaging in "Blue Valentine."

The two play a couple whose disintegrating marriage unravels when their check in at a dismal motel. Despite Ryan and Michelle's considerable appeal, the film, with its schizophrenic tone, couldn't hold our interest.

The festival's program notes misidentifically spells out the film's flaws: "... filmmaker Derek Cianfrance constructs an elegant set of dualities: past and present, youth and child-hood, vitality and entropy. The rigor of his process is visible throughout the film." Indeed. We definitely noticed the divorce.

AMY NEW YORK

A peak at Grammys: pre-party, swag suite

LOS ANGELES — It's the music world's cues to spread a little weekend excitement around town as it celebrates the industry's biggest event of the year ... Sunday's Inconvenue in Manila's 52nd Annual Grammy Awards. Here's what's going on:

Pre-party

Music tonight The Costa Rica is said until after the Grammy nods are announced to decide on the talent for his exclusive pre-Grammy party — but he's not shying looking for the top nominees to fill the bill.

"I think about who was nibbled," he said on Thursday, during preparations for Saturday's annual event at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. "Who didn't get nominated? Who should be part of the celebration of music of the year?"

Bono will likely be a video of top talent at the gala — past performers include Whitney Houston, Kanye West, Jennifer Lopez, Kelly Clarkson, the Pussycat Dolls, Johnny Mathis and Aretha Franklin.

Davis usually keeps the list of performers close to the vest, but he did reveal one name — Barry Gibb Jr., who met with him to talk about the party. Gibb said he's looking forward to the bash.

Swag suite

Lousy of looking gauche, some celebs shy away from having their photo taken when they hit up gift suites and get-free swag.

All-American Hotels' chain Town Hotels is not among them.

He happily posed for photos Thursday as he chaired the official gift suite for talent, put on by Distinctive Assets.

Rimo said the gift suites, where celebrities are showered with free goods ranging from beauty products to electronics, are the highlight of awards week. "It's the best part. I'm like, all right, we both know what we're doing, we're both whores. I love it."

Also in the gift suite Thursday was Giuseppe Cleizon, sporting a multicolored hairstyle, and musician Charlie Wilson with his wife, who showed his latest rock'n'roll duds to. "She gave a chance to tell me what suit to get. Don't get that, that's ugly. Get that pants, because I wanted," Wilson said, laughing.

Rapper's wrap

Most names have been added to the already star-studded list of presenters and performers for Sunday's Grammys — including Ja'Rhyme in whom could be his last public performance for a while.

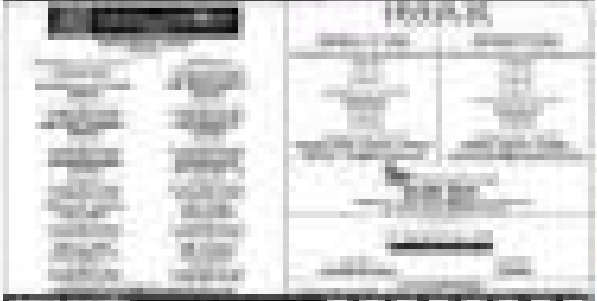
The rapper, who's due to be released next month to a year in prison on a weapons charge in New York, is scheduled to perform with Eminem and Drake, along with rocker Travis Barker. Both Eminem and Drake are nominated for Grammys.

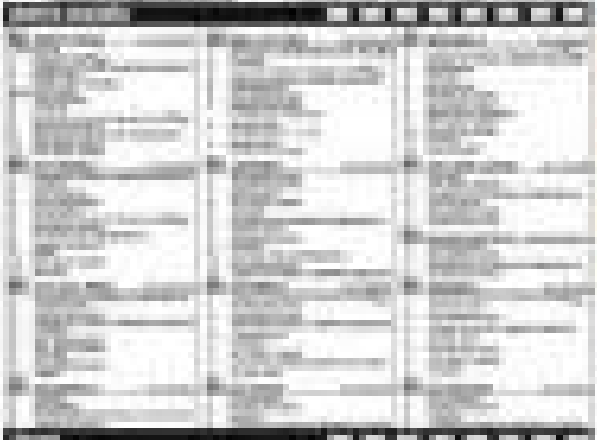
Other Grammy nominees due to perform are Jamie Foxx and T-Pain, whose "Blame It" was one of last year's hottest songs.

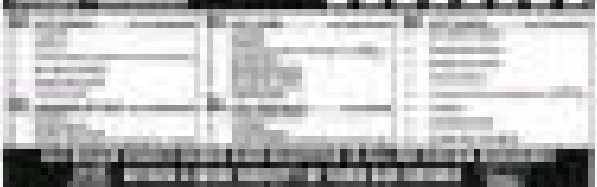
There will also be a special tribute to golden great Lee Ped Instrying Jeff Beck and Imelda May, and Celine Dion will perform with the cast of their rock opera, "Stardom Idea."

The Recording Academy also announced additional presenters, including Wyclef Jean, Kate Perry, Jennifer Lopez and Stephen Colbert. AP

CINEMA



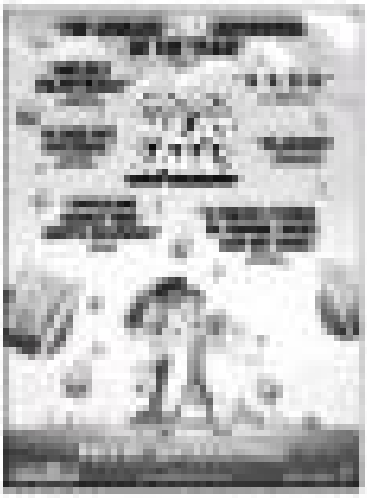


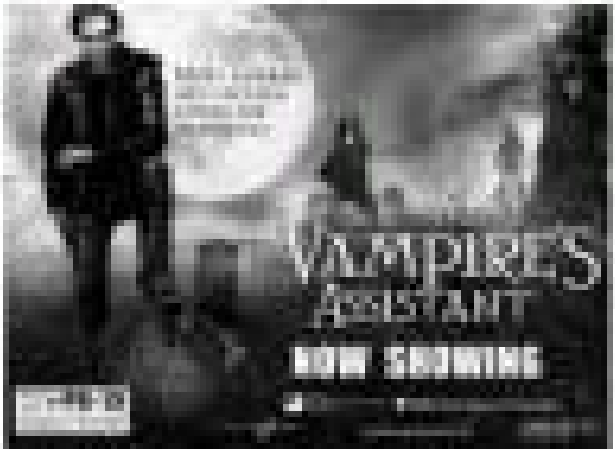


Movies for children need not be overly simplistic

krisee, Bakti rock in 'Rossawo'

Idol' Kris Allen due in Manila





THE COMEDIAN says she understands how Marlene Aguilar feels. She has also filed a case in court in defense of one of her children.

Ai Ai keeps it real: I'd lie for my kids

By Harold R. Cruz

COMEDIAN AI AI DE LAS ALAS, STRICT parent of three kids, said there's no limit to what she would do to protect her children.

"I would lie for them, especially if their safety is at stake. I know it's not a good thing to say; I'm just being realistic. Sis mother would want her kids to be taken away from her," Ai Ai told Inquirer on Wednesday. The actress has three kids — Sharon, 15, and Sophie, 13, with singer-actor Miguel Vera Sandoz, 19, a from an earlier relationship.

The arrest of fresh publisher Marlene Aguilar, mother of road rage murder suspect James Ivler, for obstruction of justice was among the subjects that came up in a briefing that Ai Ai launched for entertainment writers.

Ai Ai pointed out that, while protecting a convicted criminal is against the law, she understood why Aguilar tried to hide Ivler from the lawmen who raided their home in Quezon City on Jan. 10.

"I know how she feels. Whether Ivler is really good or bad, he is still her son," the actress said. "For [even fighting for Kamito for three years, I will not stop until the person responsible for beating him is behind bars." Ai Ai was referring to a child abuse case she filed in 2006 against an employee of a convenience store.

Ai Ai sued the employee for allegedly "manhandling, verbally abusing and detaining" Kamito, then 16, after he was accused of shoplifting at the Mini Stop branch near the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. Kamito has denied the...

During the hearing last month, Ai Ai said the defense counsel asked about an attractive saleswoman. "Even if she were allowed to," she said, "I will still refuse."

She was in Athens to meet a guy, but it's not yet serious

'Life is short'

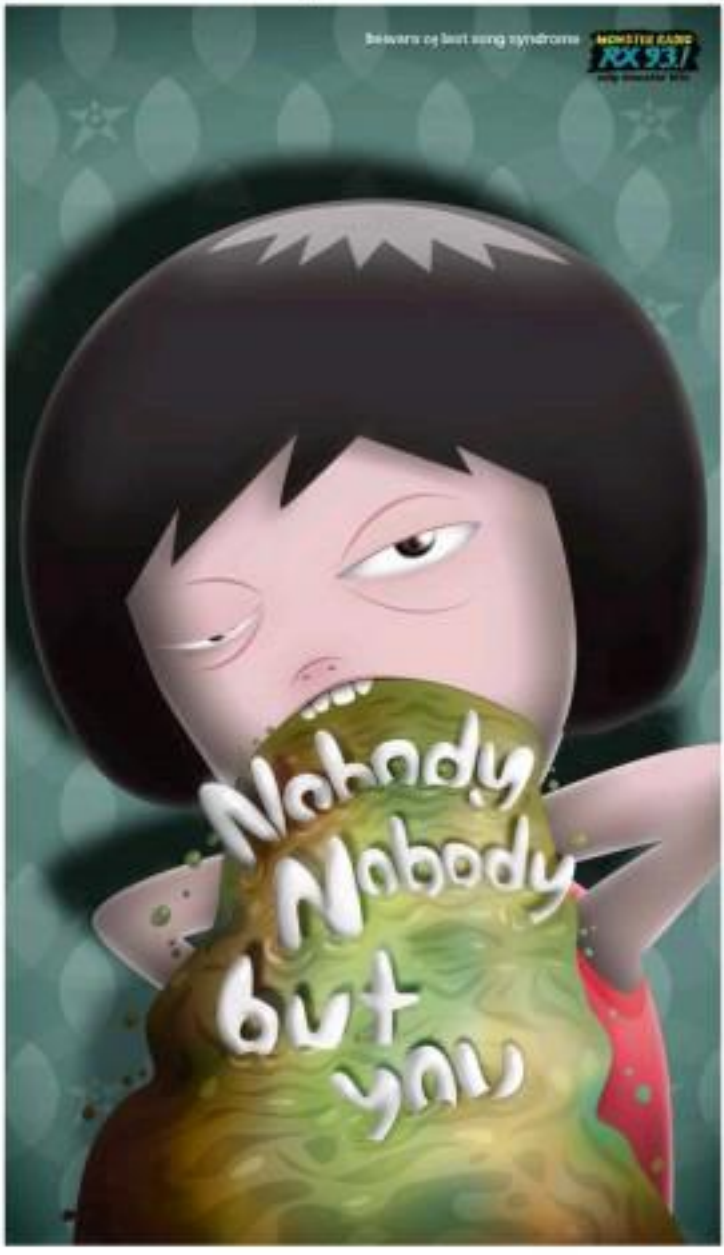
Ai Ai was in Athens last month for six days. She informed that she visited a "guy friend" that she met on the Net. The guy, whose name Ai Ai will not divulge, is a basketball player.

"Life is short. So I decided to meet him," Ai Ai said. "He knows I'm an actress and that I have three kids. We didn't get to spend a lot of time together because he was busy but he showed me around."

She added, "I didn't invite him to visit the Philippines just yet. I'm still not sure about how serious this is."

In 2009, Ai Ai was rumored to be dating a 23-year-old Venezuelan. She said that wasn't serious. "He was too young for me but went out a couple of times."

Ai Ai is one of the hosts of the ABS-CBN talent program "Pilipinas Got Talent," which premieres on Feb. 14. She was just in Cebu with fellow jurors Kris Aquino and Freddie M. Garcia for the provincial auditions, which proceeds to Cagayan de Oro.



BRANDON CAMP, DR. JENNIFER Aniston, lead star of his directorial debut, "Love Happens," opening Feb. 10 in EP cinemas:

"Jennifer is radiant on screen and she's so watchable. Her character Elaine makes us smile, persuade us to be kind, is quicky-cool but this girl next-door quality. It doesn't feel forced with Jennifer, being just a little left of center ... as much as she's a movie star, she's also relatable and accessible."